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MANDELA'S VICTORY SALUTE!

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SACP Greets Nelson Mandela

The following message of welcome was sent by the South African Communist Party to comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela on his release from jail after 27 years' imprisonment:

"Comrade,

The SACP, its central committee and entire membership, salute and warmly embrace you. It is with pride and elation that we celebrate with you today this great popular victory.

We cannot say "welcome back", because you have never left us. For 27 years you have confounded your captors by remaining in the very front ranks of our struggle. You have outlasted, outpaced, and now completely outmanoeuvred those who believed themselves to be your jailers. As South African communists we are immensely proud that our country and our people have nurtured, that our struggle has forged such an outstanding patriot.

The prison sentence the apartheid regime imposed upon you was intended to be exactly what it said, a life sentence. That they have released you today is an immense victory. But it is all the more a victory because the apartheid regime is releasing you neither from compassion nor from a position of political strength. They can no longer conceal their deepseated crisis. The heroic struggles of our people, the solidarity of freedom-loving people throughout the world, and your own refusal ever to buckle have opened your prison door.

Your release comes with a series of victories, including the simultaneous unbanning of the ANC and the SACP. That our party should be unbanned with the ANC is due in part, we know, to your own unswerving commitment to our revolutionary alliance. Our common enemies have wasted a great deal of time and energy probing for divisions. They have failed. Ours is an alliance born in common struggle and sealed in blood.

We are all now charged with moving rapidly and decisively from today's victories to our common strategic objective — the eradication of apartheid and the building of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. Central to this task, in the weeks and months ahead, will be the building, branch by branch, township by township, of a mass-based ANC.

On this historic occasion, the SACP calls upon the working class of South Africa to play its full role in this crucial task. Let us build our working class party and, shoulder to shoulder with all patriots, a powerful, united African National Congress that reaches into every corner of our country.

LONG LIVE THE ANC!
LONG LIVE THE SACP!
LONG LIVE OUR REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE!"

Joe Slovo, General Secretary, SACP. 11.2.1990

And Mandela's Response

In his speech in Soweto on February 13 Nelson Mandela said inter alia:

> **"I salute the South African Communist Party for its sterling contribution to the struggle for democracy.**
>
> **You have survived 40 years of unrelenting persecution. The memory of great Communists like Moses Kotane, Yusuf Dadoo, Bram Fischer and Moses Mabhida will be cherished for generations to come.**
>
> **I salute general secretary Joe Slovo — one of our finest patriots.**
>
> **We are heartened by the fact that the alliance between ourselves and the party remains as strong as it always was."**

DE KLERK'S CHALLENGE MUST BE ANSWERED

THE DECISIONS ANNOUNCED by President De Klerk in his speech in parliament on February 2, taken together with the release from prison of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other 'lifers', can undoubtedly be accepted s a genuine advance by the forces of liberation in South Africa. The bans on the ANC and the SACP have been lifted, and restrictions on organisations and individuals under the emergency regulations eased. There is still some uncertainty as to how far these 'concessions' go, but it is hoped that they will make possible political activity by the various organisations of the liberation movement on a scale unknown since the Suppression of Communism Act was passed in 1950.

In his February 2 speech De Klerk spoke in a tone quite different from that of his predecessors, indicating a realisation by those who hold power in our country that old methods have to be abandoned and a new course charted if South Africa is to escape from its present crisis. He said:

> "Our country and all its people have been embroiled in conflict, tension and violent struggle for decades. It is time for us to break out of the cycle of violence and break through to peace and reconciliation. The silent majority is yearning for this. The youth deserve it.".

Nelson Mandela says he accepts that De Klerk is a man of integrity, and we have no doubt he is sincere in hoping that he has done enough to bring everybody to the conference table where a new constitution will be drawn up providing, in his words, for:

> "universal franchise; no domination; equality before an independent judiciary; the protection of minorities as well as of individual rights; freedom of religion; a sound economy based on proven economic principles and private enterprise; dynamic programmes directed at better education, health services, housing and social conditions for all".

The problem is that nothing in De Klerk's speech indicates that the regime, and the white minority that buttresses its power, is yet prepared to concede the demands put forward by the liberation movement as basic to the achievement of peace and stability. 'Universal franchise', for example, must mean one person one vote in a united non-racial democratic South Africa. Everybody must have an equal right to vote and stand for election to an undivided Parliament without distinction on the grounds of race, religion, sex or any other limiting factor.

Is the slogan 'no domination' consistent with 'the protection of minorities'? Is not the concept of 'protection of minorities' a cover for the maintenance of racial division and the preservation of white minority power? As Nelson Mandela has stressed in his speeches since he came out of prison, white fears of black majority rule have to be addressed but cannot be advanced as an excuse for the denial of democracy to the majority.

As for the 'proven economic principles of private enterprise', have they not led to the development of an unsound economy, financial crisis and an enormous gap between the haves and the have-nots? Does not the parlous state of our economy justify the retention of the clauses in the Freedom Charter providing for control by a popularly elected government of the 'mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry' so that 'the national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people'?

And as for improvement in services, we do not merely demand that they shall be 'better', but that the present inequalities be totally eliminated. We want equal educational, health, housing and social services for all South Africans in the shortest possible time.

Apartheid Pillars Still Stand

It has been pointed out by almost every commentator that De Klerk's concessions, welcome as they may be, leave the main pillars of apartheid intact. With the disgraceful exception of Mrs Thatcher, most government leaders abroad have indicated that more must be done to eliminate apartheid before they would feel justified in curbing or abolishing sanctions. The ANC and SACP have called for the pressure against the regime to be stepped up on all fronts, including that of armed struggle.

De Klerk says he is prepared to talk about all this at the negotiating table, but for our part, we are not convinced that he and his supporters have yet accepted in their heart of hearts that they must concede power. They still think that by adroit diplomacy they can manipulate their opponents, inside and outside the country, into some form of compromise which will fall far short of majority rule.

Let us not deny the regime credit for what it has done. Compared with everything that has gone before under Malan, Strijdom, Verwoerd, Vorster and Botha, De Klerk has taken a big step in a different direction, realising that reliance on force alone has, far from demoralising the opposition, only toughened and tempered it into a mighty force for liberation.

But let us also assure De Klerk that, in our view, he is wrong to expect that what he has done so far is enough to ensure peace and security in South Africa. On the contrary, confrontation and conflict must inevitably increase unless something more is done to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the majority of the population. So long as the state of emergency remains in force, it does not help De Klerk to claim that he has reduced the period of detention without trial to six months. We went through all that in

1963 when 90-day detention was introduced, and we discovered the hard way that the 90-day period was renewable indefinitely, with prisoners rearrested as soon as they stepped outside the jail walls.

Furthermore, even if the state of emergency is completely lifted, the Internal Security Act with all its obnoxious provisions for indefinite detention without trial and other repressive clauses will remain on the statute book. And detention without trial is a euphemism for solitary confinement and torture, as was acknowledged by Vorster when introducing the 90-day law in Parliament in 1963.

> "It is not a very nice thing to see a human being broken. I have seen it... The man taking these powers must take the responsibility for them".

The number of political prisoners known to have been murdered in detention since 1963 totalled 72 by mid-February this year. The retention of detention without trial betrays an intention on the part of the regime to continue to resort to force if necessary to impose a solution acceptable to white South Africa... and De Klerk will have to accept responsibility for the consequences.

OUR FUTURE

We do not wish to appear negative or churlish. We welcome the opportunity for the ANC and SACP to function legally in South Africa once again. And one not unimportant by-product of these developments is that it may soon become possible for the first time since it was founded in 1959 for *The African Communist* to be published and distributed legally in South Africa.

De Klerk's initiative presents the liberation movement with a great challenge. The ANC and SACP and all sections of the Mass Democratic Movement must rise to this challenge and step up the level of struggle to the point where it becomes irresistible, bringing about the transformation of South African society on the lines for which so many have sacrificed so much over the years.

BUILD A STRONG SACP

The following statement was issued by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party last February:

The Central Committee (CC) of the South African Communist Party has met to consider the new challenges and opportunities facing our Party. Forty years after banning us, the apartheid regime has been forced to concede that it can never uproot communist organisation and communist ideas from the soil of South Africa. Today our Party is emerging from the underground with massive prestige and popularity. The CC is fully aware of the weighty responsibilities this prestige and popularity place upon our Party and upon each one of our militants.

Although our Party has been unbanned, the illegitimate apartheid regime remains in power. Highly repressive legislation remains on the South African statute books. FW de Klerk has implemented some important first steps, but his regime is committed to a brutal economic policy that is anti-worker, and indeed against the interests of the majority of South Africans. His policies of privatisation, especially in the specific conditions of entrenched racial oppression, are handing over ever greater chunks of our national wealth to a small circle of white capitalists.

Over the past year the regime, in collusion with the bosses, has launched a brutal offensive against the organised working class. All too often labour relations are being conducted at gun-point. In a period in which De Klerk has proclaimed his concern for negotiations, his government has been tinkering with the anti-worker Labour Relations Act without once consulting with the progressive trade union movement.

Precisely becaue communists espouse the immediate and long term interests of the working people, we have no doubt that, as our Party emerges from illegality, communists will remain prime targets for all kinds of repression — legalised and informal. We shall not be deterred. We are determined to seize the time, making creative use of the new opportunities, rising to the new challenges.

A major objective of the coming months will be the building of a strong, legal SACP rooted among the working masses of our people. A concerted campaign of mobilisation and organisation will be undertaken, with its focus upon the tens of thousands of militant workers and youth who have, over the last years, openly associated themselves with the traditions and ideals of the South

African Communist Party. To this end the SACP is in the process of consulting our underground and other structures, and we shall shortly be announcing a public SACP leadership core within our country. We shall also be despatching Communist Party members into the country to strengthen this core as soon as possible.

Our Party is determined to rally all those within our country who are genuinely committed to a socialist future. Now, more than ever, the place of all socialists is within the ranks of the South African Communist Party. In building a powerful, above-board Party let us avoid all forms of sectarianism, elitism and dogmatism. Let us spread and deepen a liberating and democratic socialist culture within our country.

The CC reaffirms the SACP's firm commitment to our revolutionary alliance with the ANC. The new situation will present us with opportunities for creatively deepening and extending still further this alliance. A major task facing all Party militants in the coming months will be not only that of building our Party, but of assisting with the construction of a mass-based ANC, the leading organisation in our national liberation struggle.

The CC wholeheartedly endorses the February 16 statement of the ANC NEC, and we commend the initiative to present, face-to-face with De Klerk, those outstanding preconditions that need to be implemented in order to create a negotiating climate.

LONG LIVE THE SACP!
LONG LIVE THE SACP-ANC ALLIANCE!
FORWARD TO A DEMOCRATIC VICTORY AND AN ADVANCE TO SOCIALISM!

THE CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST WORLD

The seriousness of the crisis which has overtaken the international Communist movement cannot be overstated. The collapse of the Communist-dominated governments of Eastern Europe, the gathering complications frustrating the implementation of the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the

Soviet Union, the Tiananmen Square massacre in Peking last June, the formal abandonment of many of the policies of Marxism-Leninism by a number of Communist parties — all these factors have greatly altered the balance of forces in the world. In the immediate post-war period there was a "world socialist system" embracing more than one third of the world's population, ideologically united and constituting a powerful international force for peace and social progress. Today this system is in a state of disarray.

At its 7th Congress held in the first months of 1989, the South African Communist Party adopted a new programme which outlined three main ways in which the socialist system contributed to the revolutionary process of transition from capitalism to communism. These were:

> "First, the existence of socialist countries, their growing might, and their foreign policies, based on working class internationalism, have brought about gradual changes in the worldwide balance of forces between imperialism and all the forces opposing it. The growing might of the socialist countries restricts imperialism's ability to export counter-revolution.
>
> Secondly, the advances of the socialist countries inspire the working people throughout the world to struggle for social and national emancipation, raising the level of their demands and programmes of action.
>
> Thirdly, socialist countries provide significant and many-sided support to revolutionary movements throughout the world."

This was all true at the time, but in the months since then the picture has been transformed. Communist power in many countries has been broken by popular insurrection, and is being challenged by a variety of centrifugal forces even in the Soviet Union itself. What is the explanation for this astonishing turnabout in the international arena? Where will it all end? Let us consider briefly the three points from the SACP programme.

IMPERIALISM BENEFITS

1. To the extent that the strength and will of the socialist forces have been eroded, imperialism is the undoubted beneficiary. The clearest proof of this was provided by the United States invasion of Panama and kidnapping of General Noriega — acts of lawless

brigandage which were condemned by the United Nations and world opinion as a whole, but which have become accomplished if not universally accepted facts because they coincided with the Romanian revolution on which the attention of the media became concentrated.

Ceausescu and his wife Elena were arraigned, convicted and executed for the crime of genocide which was alleged at the time to have cost the lives of 60,000 Romanian citizens slaughtered by the securitate police force — a casualty figure scaled down to 689 by the time four members of Ceausecsu's politburo were brought to trial at the end of January. The United States forces slaughtered far more than that number of Panamanian citizens in the course of their invasion, yet Bush still presides at the White House in Washington and, far from being charged with genocide as he should be, is praised by the media of the capitalist world for having rescued Panama for "democracy".

The most serious consequence of the communist collapse in Eastern Europe, however, is the erosion of the strength and unity of the forces of the Warsaw Pact which was set up to counter the Western powers' creation of NATO after the Second World War. Soviet forces are today being pressured to withdraw from all of Eastern Europe while the US forces stay put.

SELF-CRITICISM TO EXCESS

2. If the achievements of the socialist countries have always been an inspiration to working people throughout the world to struggle for social and national emancipation, socialist crisis has the opposite, disheartening effect. The current sense of let-down is exacerbated by the apparent determination of communist parties in some socialist countries to belittle their real achievements and exaggerate their shortcomings in the hope of establishing their democratic credentials.

SOLIDARITY EFFORT

3. Let us again acknowledge the enormous and wide-ranging support which has been generously given by the socialist countries to revolutionary movements throughout the world in the finest spirit of proletarian internationalism, including inter

alia a massive contribution by the GDR towards the printing and distribution of this journal.

The present turmoil in Europe cannot enhance the prospect of aid being advanced on the same scale as hitherto. The German Democratic Republic, for example, is only justified in existing as an independent entity to the extent that it is socialist. If the socialist forces are defeated, reunification with the German Federal Republic is inevitable — and we all know that the FRG is a supporter of the De Klerk government, not of the liberation movement headed by the ANC.

Nor was it only liberation movements that were the beneficiaries of solidarity aid from the socialist countries. The newly independent countries that were formerly colonies of the imperialist powers were given the most extensive and non-exploitative assistance by the socialist countries to enable them to stand on their feet, including military aid where necessary to withstand the pressures of counter-revolution. In the absence of this support from the socialist countries, the third world will be much weakened in its struggle to fend off the grasping tentacles of the multi-national corporations.

BOTHA IN HUNGARY

The South African regime has been quick to sense an opportunity to profit from the communist debacle in Eastern Europe. Foreign Minister Pik Botha wangled an invitation from the Hungarian government to visit Budapest and is seeking further openings. In an interview with the London *Independent* on January 24 he expressed satisfaction that the ANC had been dealt a body blow and declared that "never before have South Africa's chances of breaking out of its political isolation in Africa seemed better".

The African National Congress issued an angry statement denouncing the Hungarian invitation to Botha as an act of betrayal. An SACP statement issued on January 4 declared:

> "The International Committee of the South African Communist Party condemns the decision of the Hungarian Government to invite the South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha to visit their country. At a time when the National Liberation Movement headed by the African National Congress and the Mass Democratic Movement are calling for an intensification of the boycott as a vital contribution towards their

> struggle to end apartheid, the action of the Hungarian Government can only be interpreted by the South African people as 'an encouragement to their enemy. We call upon the Hungarian Government to end all contact with the South African regime and revert to their previous honourable stance of total solidarity and support for the South African liberation struggle."

Perhaps the South African liberation movement, together with progressive organisations in other countries, has taken the support of the socialist countries too much for granted in the past. But it is now clear that the extent of solidarity with our struggle displayed by these governments has been in direct proportion to the extent to which they were genuinely committed to the cause of socialism. Their solidarity effort was not the outcome of sentimentalism or opportunism but arose from their ideological understanding that the struggle for socialism and the struggle for national liberation were inextricably linked. Imperialism was a common enemy.

For any government today to promote trade, sporting or diplomatic links with South Africa is to betray the cause of national liberation.

Pik Botha himself appreciates very well that the decline and fall of communist governments in Eastern Europe has been to the benefit of the forces of racism and imperialism worldwide. In his interview with the *Independent*, Botha maintained that "the inevitable curtailment of East European aid to South Africa's economically-dependent neighbours would leave these countries with no option but to improve relations with South Africa". He envisaged the ultimate development of a South African version of the Marshall Plan which would place the apartheid regime in a position of dominance over all of Southern Africa. "Economic strength could evolve into political strength, into alliances where there was once antagonism".

In other words, Pik Botha acknowledges that the power and strength of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries was a major factor in curtailing South Africa's imperialist ambitions in Africa. It is to be hoped that this admission will spread the understanding in all sections of our movement that it is in the fundamental interest of our own national liberation that the cause of socialism should be advanced, not only in Eastern Europe, but worldwide.

A socialist Britain, a socialist America, a socialist Germany and a socialist Japan could and would impose effective sanctions against South Africa which would bring down the apartheid regime overnight. The continuation in office of people like Bush, Thatcher, Kohl and company only delays the resolution of our conflict and perpetuates the suffering of our people.

Which still leaves open the question of what is socialism? And why did the governments of the socialist countries collapse? There is no easy answer to these questions, about which debate has raged ever since the campaigns for *perestroika* and *glasnost* were launched in the Soviet Union, and about which controversy has intensified in the wake of the cataclysmic events of the last few months.

The South African Communist Party is not inclined to succumb to the imperialist ideological offensive seeking to establish that capitalism is superior to socialism, and that the cold war has been won by the West. As we stated in the last issue of *The African Communist*, we still believe that "no matter what happens to the existing socialist countries, capitalism has failed and will continue to fail to end class struggle and oppression and the fight for socialism will continue".

THE PATH TO POWER

But what sort of socialism? And brought about by what methods? In our own South Africa, has our conception of the path to power been changed?

As a contribution to the debate, a pamphlet has recently been written by the general secretary of the South African Communist Party, Joe Slovo, and approved for publication by the Party leadership as a draft discussion paper. It is not a final statement of SACP policy but the opening shot in a debate to which all interested parties including members of the SACP itself are being asked to contribute.

We publish also in this issue the full text of a speech by Fidel Castro last December at a memorial ceremony "for the Cuban internationalists who fell while carrying out honourable military and civilian missions". We do so, not because we endorse the sharp criticisms made by Castro of policies pursued or advocated in some of the socialist countries, but because we feel that his speech was of such importance at this juncture in international affairs that it demands study by all members of our movement.

We believe that what is going on in the international Communist movement today is not a process of demolition but of cleansing. The constitution of the SACP declares that its aim is to establish a socialist republic in South Africa based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, to promote the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the workers of South Africa and the world, and to participate in and strengthen the World Communist Movement.

Nothing that has happened in Eastern Europe or elsewhere makes us believe that this perspective needs to be altered.

A Luta Continua!

Govan Mbeki replies to De Klerk

The following interview with *The African Communist* was conducted a few days after the South African President told Parliament on February 2 that he was lifting the bans on the ANC and SACP. Govan Mbeki is a member of both organisations.

The African Communist: Comrade Govan, can you tell us what you think about the situation that has arisen in the wake of De Klerk's speech in Parliament?

Govan Mbeki: The position is still very fluid with regard to the situation inside the country. It means first that there must be a shift from the underground structures which have been operating in the country to meet the present situation.

What are we to do with these structures? Are we going to scrap them and come out openly? On the other hand, can we be certain that the process which De Klerk says he is setting in motion is going to succeed? If there are still uncertainties about this, then it appears to me that we would have to keep the underground structures intact while at the same time we start structuring the organisation for legal operations.

De Klerk has not acceded to the demand indicated in the Harare Declaration for the creation of a climate for negotiations between the regime and the ANC. He is going to unban the ANC, SACP and other subsidiary organisations. But on the question of releasing all political prisoners he has not come out clearly at all. He has one definition of what constitutes a political prisoner, and we have another. From his point of view all those convicted of "terrorist" and similar activities related to the political struggle are not political prisoners, they are criminals. This matter will still have to be straightened out.

The state of emergency has been partially lifted but De Klerk still leaves room for the detention of people without trial for up to six months. The army is still in the townships. So all in all De Klerk has not created the climate for negotiations in terms of the Harare Declaration.

AC: In other words, you are not convinced that De Klerk is serious when he claims he is doing away with white supremacy?

GM: There is no indication of his programme. He says in a statement over the TV that he has warned the whites they cannot expect to continue to be the dominant group and must share power. But he hasn't done anything more than that.

AC: Buthelezi has called on the people to abandon all forms of extra-parliamentary struggle like MK, street demonstrations and strikes and concentrate on negotiations. He maintains that if the blacks do not get what they want from negotiations now, it is their own fault. What do you feel about that?

GM: Well, Buthelezi does not speak for the people, he speaks for Inkatha. He has been working within the structures of the regime. In fact he has been fighting from the same trenches as the regime. So his view is not expressive of what the rest of the people are thinking and doing.

A Beginning Has Been Made

GM: Let us accept that a beginning has been made. De Klerk has taken a step forward and that we acknowledge. His lifting of the bans on the ANC and SACP can't be brushed aside as if nothing has happened. But how can the ANC go to the negotiating table if it is unable to hold meetings freely and openly amongst the people to get their mandate? As long as the state of emergency is not fully lifted, we have to get these matters cleared up by the regime.

AC: The regime says it has taken a step forward. Without wishing to deny what has been done, are we not entitled to ask — a step forward to what? What is the regime trying to achieve with these, let us call them concessions?

GM: In the first place the regime is making these concessions to impress on the international community that it is creating a situation in which, in De Klerk's own words, democracy is working in South Africa. But the regime has not yet made a statement indicating that if it enters into negotiations it is prepared to grasp the nettle that power may pass to the people. It's a question of power. If the regime is not prepared to see power in the hands of the people then we may be talking and talking for a long time without ever really getting anywhere.

AC: When the regime talks about negotiations, do you think that in their minds there is going to be a place at the table for the Communist Party?

GM: They have no way of avoiding it. Some members of the ANC, including responsible members of the ANC, are also members of the SACP. Some members of the CP are also members of the ANC.

AC: I think all members of the SACP are members of the ANC.

GM: Now how can the regime draw a line? It can't draw a line there. If there are going to be negotiations, if the regime calls on all organisations to be at the table, then the SACP will be there. And even if the regime deals only with the ANC, then the ANC is going to appoint delegates to the negotiating table who may be members of the SACP. It can't avoid that.

Mood of the People

I would like to give you a picture of the mood amongst the people outside and their attitude towards the SACP. On Robben Island there is hardly any young chap who comes there who is not already or who does not want to be a member of the SACP. By 1983 we had drawn up two types of syllabus. One was on the national question which took 3 to 4 years to cover in units of the Party because everything of course had to be done there in underground conditions. By 1986 we had drawn up a second syllabus which covered the development of society and this dealt with the development of mankind from primitive times to the feudal period and up to the introduction of capitalism and where we are today. The study of Marxist-Leninist literature and theory was done by all units irrespective of whether they were SACP members or not.

Coming out of jail the mood of the people and especially the prestige which the SACP enjoys amongst the people, especially the younger generation, is unlike anything we have seen in the past. You have seen on the TV the marches and demonstrations which have taken place on the streets, with the ANC flag and the SACP flag side by side.

AC: Do you think the legalisation of the ANC and the SACP would make any difference to the alliance between them?

GM: I don't think it will. We haven't the extreme nationalist tendencies that characterised the earlier period when the Africanists broke away from the ANC. We haven't got that today. And I expect that depending on the work it does, large numbers of people are going to join the Party. The Party is not a mass movement like the ANC but we have got to be realistic. We cannot afford to be so conservative as to keep out large numbers especially of the younger people who want to join the Party.

AC: Why do you think there is a need for a Communist Party in South Africa today?

GM: The South African population is stratified like the population in any of the advanced countries — for that matter even in the undeveloped countries the population is stratified — and in South Africa the working class is the dominant sector amongst the oppressed people. It is leading the struggle and it is proud of its position as a working class. It is important that it should be armed with the theory of the working class. The need is there and it is great and must be satisfied.

Eastern Europe

AC: The bourgeois media are suggesting that the ideology of communism has been discredited by the events in eastern Europe. What do you feel about that?

GM: Well, they are justified from their own propaganda point of view, but what one understands to be taking place in eastern Europe was that certain distortions had been taking place in the development of the Communist Parties leading to the development of a bureaucracy which had an interest in perpetuating itself. But one should also take into account the historical background of these distortions.

After the October Revolution in 1917 the Soviet Union was isolated and attacked by external powers and civil strife was encouraged by the imperialists. The Soviet Union had to develop some defensive mechanism to ensure that the revolution was saved and defended. It was a poor country compared with the imperialist countries so it had to go through a period during which it had to make sure that everybody had something to put into his or her mouth.

Socialism puts man at the centre of the stage. Capitalism puts profit at the centre of the stage. In capitalist society and capitalist economics, when they talk of demand, they are not talking of demand for all the people. Demand to them, as for instance in the writings of Keynes, means effective demand, which means it is only those who can afford to pay that matter. The rest must see to themselves. That is why in advanced economies like the British or American you still find millions of people who are poor and uncared for. Because they don't create the demand they hardly exist.

Now in a socialist economy everybody must eat, and in a situation of undevelopment such as there was in the Soviet Union after the October Revolution, what was produced had to go round so that everybody could have it. In the course of implementing socialism these distortions occurred, bureaucracy occurred. Probably it was left too long. But we should also remember that it was after the second World War that Churchill made his notorious Fulton speech. The people's democracies had just started and the imperialist countries unleashed some of the most vicious propaganda against the socialist countries, accompanied by the threat of attack. If fact, had the Soviet Union not developed the nuclear bomb at that time, it is doubtful if the people's democracies in eastern Europe would have survived.

The Soviet Union itself would have been attacked — recall the speeches of Secretary of State John Dulles, recall the campaigns that were unleashed in America under McCarthyism. It was in the course of all this that the distortions took place and I think that to start analysing the position in the socialist countries at the stage we are in right now would not enable us to understand the nature of the problems which have led to this situation.

Today the socialist countries, as indicated by the campaigns of *perestroika* and *glasnost,* have come to accept that these distortions must be eliminated. I do not think that the people in the socialist countries are throwing out socialism. I think it is the bureaucracies they want to throw out. Time will tell, but it is my view that the peoples in eastern Europe are correcting errors that have occurred over time.

Also bear in mind that no other country worldwide subjects itself to self-criticism in the way the Communist Party does. And when it does, it is open about it. Mikhail Gorbachev in his book does not say he is discarding communism. He says he is correcting errors that have been made and I think that is the process that is taking place in eastern Europe.

AC: So far as you are concerned, the perspective that we are living in the era of transition from capitalism to communism is still valid?

GM: Yes.

Has Socialism Failed?

by Joe Slovo

The subject matter of this discussion paper will no doubt be debated for years to come both inside and outside the ranks of communist and workers' parties. The publication of this draft has been authorised by our party's leadership, as a launching pad for further critical thought. Some colleagues have made extremely valuable suggestions, which have been incorporated. But, as a whole, it represents the first reflections of the author only. **January 1990**

INTRODUCTION

Socialism is undoubtedly in the throes of a crisis greater than at any time since 1917. The last half of 1989 saw the dramatic collapse of most of the communist party governments of Eastern Europe. Their downfall was brought about through massive upsurges which had the support not only of the majority of the working class but also a large slice of the membership of the ruling parties themselves. **These were popular revolts against unpopular regimes; if socialists are unable to come to terms with this reality, the future of socialism is indeed bleak.**

The mounting chronicle of crimes and distortions in the history of existing socialism, its economic failures and the divide which developed between socialism and democracy, have raised doubts in the minds of many former supporters of the socialist cause as to whether socialism can work at all. Indeed, we must expect that, for a time, many in the affected countries will be easy targets for those aiming to achieve a reversion to capitalism, including an embrace of its external policies.[1]

Shock-waves of very necessary self-examination have also been triggered off amongst communists both inside and outside the socialist world. **For our part, we firmly believe in the future of socialism; nor do we dismiss its whole past as an unmitigated failure.**[2] Socialism certainly produced a Stalin and a Ceausescu, but it also produced a Lenin and a Gorbachev. Despite the distortions at the top, the nobility of socialism's basic objectives inspired millions upon millions to devote themselves selflessly to building it on the ground. And no one can doubt that if humanity is today poised to enter an unprecedented era of peace and civilised relations, it is in the first place due to the efforts of the socialist world.

But it is more vital than ever to subject the past of existing socialism to an unsparing critique in order to draw the necessary lessons. To do so openly is an assertion of justified confidence in the future of socialism and its inherent moral superiority. And we should not allow ourselves to be inhibited merely because an exposure of failures will inevitably provide ammunition to the traditional enemies of socialism: our silence will, in any case, present them with even more powerful ammunition.

IDEOLOGICAL RESPONSES

The ideological responses to the crisis of existing socialism by constituents of what was previously known as the International Communist and Workers' movement (and among our own members) is still so varied and tentative that it is early days to attempt a neat categorisaion. But at the risk of over-simplification, we identify a number of broad tendencies against which we must guard:

A: Finding excuses for Stalinism
B: Attributing the crisis to the pace of perestroika
C: Acting as if we have declared a moratorium on socialist criticism of capitalism and imperialism and, worst of all,
D: Concluding that socialist theory made the distortions inevitable.

A. Sticking to Stalinism

The term 'Stalinism' is used to denote the bureaucratic-authoritarian style of leadership (of parties both in and out of power) which denuded the party and the practice of socialism of most of its democratic content and concentrated power in the hands of a tiny, self-perpetuating élite.

While the mould for Stalinism was cast under Stalin's leadership it is not suggested that he bears sole responsibility for its negative practices. The essential content of Stalinism — socialism without democracy — was retained even after Stalin in the Soviet Union (until Gorbachev's intervention), albeit without some of the terror, brutality and judicial distortions associated with Stalin himself.

Among a diminishing minority there is still a reluctance to look squarely in the mirror of history and to concede that the socialism it reflects has, on balance, been so distorted that an appeal to its positive achievements (and of course there have been many) sounds hollow and very much like special pleading. It is surely now obvious that if the socialist world stands in tatters at this historic moment it is due to the Stalinist distortions.

We should have little patience with the plea in mitigation that, in the circumstances, the Stalinist excesses (such as forced collectivisation) brought about some positive economic achievements. Statistics showing high growth rates during Stalin's time prove only that methods of primitive accumulation[3] can stimulate purely quantitative growth in the early stages of capitalism or socialism — but at what human cost? In any case, more and more evidence is emerging daily that, in the long run, the excesses inhibited the economic potential of socialism.

Another familiar plea in mitigation is that the mobilising effect of the Stalin cult helped save socialism from military defeat. It is, however, now becoming clear that the virtual destruction of the command personnel of the Red Army, the lack of effective preparation against Hitler's onslaught and Stalin's dictatorial and damaging interventions in the conduct of the war could have cost the Soviet Union its victory.

Vigilance is clearly needed against the pre-perestroika styles of work and thinking which infected virtually every party (including ours) and moulded its members for so many decades. It is not enough merely to engage in the self-pitying cry: 'we were misled'; we should rather ask why so many communists allowed themselves to become so blinded for so long. And, more importantly, why they behaved like Stalinists towards those of their comrades who raised even the slightest doubt about the 'purity' of Stalin's brand of socialism.

In the socialist world there are still outposts which unashamedly mourn the retreat from Stalinism and use its dogmas to 'justify' undemocratic and tyrannical practices. It is clearly a matter of time before popular revulsion leads to a transformation. In general, those who still defend the Stalinist model — even in a qualified way — are a dying breed; at the ideological level they will undoubtedly be left behind and they need not detain us here.

B. Blaming Gorbachev

Most communists, of course, concede that a great deal 'went wrong' and needs to be corrected. Some, however, fear that the corrective methods are so hasty and extreme that, in the end, they may do more harm than good. The enemies of socialism, so it is argued, are being given new powerful weapons with which to destroy socialism and to return to capitalism. The pace of Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost are, either directly or indirectly, blamed for the 'collapse' of communist political hegemony in countries like Poland, Hungary, GDR and Czechoslovakia.

In the countries mentioned, despite the advantage of over 40 years of a monopoly of education, the media, etc., the parties in power could not find a significant section of the class they claimed to represent (or, for that matter, even a majority of their own membership) to defend them or their version of socialism. **To blame perestroika and glasnost for the ailments of socialism is like blaming the diagnosis and prescription for the illness**. Indeed, the only way to ensure the future of socialism is to grasp the nettle with the political courage of a Gorbachev.

When things go badly wrong (whether it be in a movement or a country) it is inevitable that some who have ulterior motives jump on to the bandwagon. When a gap develops between the leadership and the led, it always provides openings for real enemies. But to deal with the gap in terms only of enemy conspiracies is an ancient and discredited device. Equally, to fail to tackle mistakes or crimes merely because their exposure will give comfort to our adversaries is both short-sighted and counter-productive.

In any case, a number of additional questions still go begging.

Firstly, have we the right to conclude that the enemies of a discredited party leadership are the same as the enemies of socialism? If the type of socialism which the people have experienced has been rubbished in their eyes and they begin to question it, are they necessarily questioning socialism or are they rejecting its perversion?

Secondly, what doctrine of pre-Stalinism and pre-Mao Marxism gives a communist party (or any other party for that matter) the moral or political right to impose its hegemony or to maintain it in the face of popular rejection?

Thirdly, who has appointed us to impose and defend at all costs **our version of socialism** even if the overwhelming majority have become disillusioned with it?

In general, it is our view that the fact that the processes of perestroika and glasnost came too slowly, too little and too late in Eastern Europe did more than anything else to endanger the socialist perspective there. **It is through these processes — and they must be implemented with all possible speed — that socialism has any hope of showing its essentially human face.** When socialism as a world system comes into its own again — as it undoubtedly will — the 'Gorbachev revolution' will have played a seminal role.

C. Abandoning the Ideological Contest

We are impressed with the contribution which crusading pro-perestroika journals (such as *Moscow News* and *New Times*) are making to the renovation of socialism. At the same time, we must not overlook the alarming tendency among many media partisans of perestroika to focus so exclusively on the blemishes of the socialist experience that the **socialist critique of capitalism and imperialism finds little, if any, place.**

In keeping with this excessive defensiveness, there is a tendency to underplay some of the most graphic pointers to the superior moral potential of socialist civilisation. For instance, it is a sad commentary on earlier socialist history that the Soviet people are now moved to erect monuments to the victims of the Stalin period. But the capitalist world is planning no monuments to those of its citizens ravaged by its cruelties nor to millions of victims of its colonial terror.

The transformations which have occurred in Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria are revolutionary in scope. With the exception of Romania, is there another example in human history in which those in power have responded to the inevitable with such a civilised and pacific resignation?

We should remember De Gaulle's military response in 1968 when two million workers and students filled the streets of Paris. It is not difficult to forecast how Bush or Thatcher would deal with millions in their streets supported by general strikes demanding the overthrow of their system of rule.

Some Soviet journals have become so exclusively focused on self-criticism that the social inequalities within capitalism and the continuing plunder by international capital of the resources of the developing world through neo-colonial manipulation, unequal trade and the debt burden, receive little emphasis. Middle class elements, including many journalists within socialist societies, seem **mesmerised by pure technocracy; the glitter of Western consumerism, and the quality of up-market goods, appear to overshadow the quality of life for society as a whole.**[4]

There is less visible than at any time a critique of imperialism's continuing human rights violations and its gross interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states through surrogates and direct aggression, and its continuing support for banditry and racist and military dictatorships.

The gloss which is put in some of these journals on social and political conditions inside the capitalist West itself has been described by Jonathan Steele in the British *Guardian* as little less than 'grotesque'. In some contributions capitalism is prettified in the same generalised and unscholarly way as it used to be condemned, i.e. without researched statistics and with dogma taking the place of information. The borderline between socialism and what is called welfare capitalism is increasingly blurred.

In contrast to all this, whatever else may be happening in international relations, **the ideological offensive by the representatives of capitalism against socialism is certainly at full blast.**

The Western media gloat repeatedly with headlines such as 'Communism — R.I.P.'. Professor Robert Heilbroner, a luminary of the New York New School, has already raised the champagne glass with a victory toast for capitalism. Asserting that the Soviet Union, China and Eastern Europe have proved that capitalism organises the material affairs of humankind more satisfactorily than socialism, he goes on to proclaim:

> 'Less than 75 years after it officially began, the contest between capitalism and socialism is over; capitalism has won... the great question now seems how rapid will be the transformation of socialism into capitalism, and not the other way round.[5]

Just in case more is needed to fulfil this prediction, some of capitalism's more powerful representatives are there to give history a helping hand. Reagan's final boast for his eight years in office was that he saw to it that not one more inch of territory in the world 'went communist'. Bush takes up the baton with: 'We can now move from containment to bring the socialist countries into the community of free nations'. The *Guardian* (2/6/89, United Kingdom) reports a multi-million pound initiative, endorsed by British ministers, to encourage change in Eastern Europe. And so on.

In the face of all this, it is no exaggeration to claim that, for the moment, the socialist critique of capitalism and the drive to win the hearts and minds of humanity for socialism have been virtually abandoned. **The unprecedented offensive by capitalist ideologues against socialism has indeed been met by a unilateral ideological disarmament.**

To the extent that this has come about through the need to concentrate on putting our own house in order it is, at least, understandable. But, in many cases, there is an inability to distinguish between socialism in general and the incorrect methods which were used to translate it on the ground. This has led to an unjustified flirtation with certain economic and political values of capitalism.

The perversion of democracy in the socialist experience is falsely contrasted to its practice in the capitalist West as if the latter gives adequate scope for the fulfilment of democratic ideals. The economic ravages caused by excessive centralisation and commandism under socialism seem able to have pushed into the background the basic socialist critique of capitalism that **a society cannot be democratic which is ruled by profit and social inequality and in which power over the most vital areas of life is outside public control.**

Losing Faith in the Socialist Objective

Some communists have been completely overwhelmed by the soiled image of socialism which they see in the mirror of history. They conclude that it reflects not only **what was** (and in the case of some countries, **what still is**), but, in addition, **what inevitably had to be** in the attempts to build a socialist society as understood by the founding fathers of socialist doctrine.

If, indeed, what happened in the socialist world **had to happen** because of some or all of our theoretical starting points, if the Stalin-type perversion is unavoidable, then there is no more to be said; we must clearly either seek an alternative to socialism or throw overboard, or at least qualify, some of its postulates.[6]

We believe, however, that the theory of Marxism, in all its essential respects, remains valid and provides an indispensable theoretical guide to achieve a society free of all forms of exploitation of person by person. The major weaknesses which have emerged in the practice of socialism are the results of distortions and misapplications. They do not flow naturally from the basic concepts of Marxism whose core is essentially humane and democratic and which projects a social order with an economic potential vastly superior to that of capitalism.

MARXIST THEORY UNDER FIRE

Let us touch on some of the concepts which have come under fire in the post-perestroika polemics:

- Marxism maintains that the class struggle is the motor of human history.[7] Some commentators in the socialist media are showing a temptation to jettison this theory merely because Stalin and the bureaucracy around him distorted it to rationalise tyrannical practices. But **it remains valid both as an explanation of past social transformations and as a guide to the strategy and tactics of the struggle to win a socialist order;** a struggle in which the working class plays the dominant role.

- The economic stagnation of socialism and its poor technological performance as compared to the capitalist world sector cannot be attributed to the ineffectiveness of socialist relations of production but rather to their distortion. **Socialist relations of production provide the most effective framework for maximising humanity's productive capacity and using its products in the interests of the whole society.**

- Marxist ethical doctrine sees no conflict between the contention that all morality is class-related and the assertion that working class values are concerned, above all, with the supremacy of human values.[8] The separation of these inter-dependent concepts (in later theory and practice) provided the context in which crimes against the people were rationalised in the name of the class.

We continue to assert that it is only in a non-exploitative, communist, classless society that human values will find their ultimate expression and be freed of all class-related morality. In

the meanwhile the socialist transition has the potential of progressively asserting the values of the whole people over those of classes.

- The great divide which developed between socialism and political democracy should not be treated as flowing naturally from key aspects of socialist doctrine. This approach is fuelled by the sullied human rights record and the barrack-room collectivism of some of the experiences of existing socialism. We believe that **Marxism clearly projects a system anchored in deep-seated political democracy and the rights of the individual which can only be truly attained when society as a whole assumes control and direction of all its riches and resources.**

- The crucial connection between socialism and internationalism and the importance of world working-class solidarity should not be underplayed as a result of the distortions which were experienced. These included excessive centralisation in the era of the Comintern, subordination of legitimate national aspirations to a distorted concept of 'internationalism', national rivalries between and within socialist states (including examples of armed confrontation). **Working class internationalism remains one of the most liberating concepts in Marxism and needs to find effective expression in the new world conditions.**

In summary, we believe that Marxism is a social science whose fundamental postulates and basic insights into the historical processeses remain a powerful (because accurate) theoretical weapon. But this is not to say that every word of Marx, Engels and Lenin must be taken as gospel; they were not infallible and they were not always correct in their projections.

Lenin for example, believed that capitalism was about to collapse worldwide in the post-October period

It was a belief based on the incorrect premise that, as a system, capitalism had already reached the stage at which the capitalist relations of production constituted an obstacle to the further all-round development of the forces of production.

This was combined with a belief in the imminence of global socialist transformation, which undoubtedly infected much of the earlier thinking about the perspectives of socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

Also, it could well be argued that the classical description of bourgeois democracy[9] was an over-simplification and tended to underestimate the historic achievements of working class struggle in imposing and defending aspects of a real democratic culture on the capitalist state; a culture which should not disappear but rather needs to be explained under true socialism.

But we emphasise again that the fundamental distortions which emerged in the practice of existing socialism cannot be traced to the essential tenets of Marxist revolutionary science.

If we are looking for culprits, we must look at ourselves and not at the founders of Marxism.

The Fault Lies with us, not with Socialism

In some cases, the deformations experienced by existing socialist states were the results of bureaucratic distortions which were rationalised at the ideological level by a mechanical and out-of-context invocation of Marxist dogma. In other cases they were the results of a genuinely-motivated but tragic misapplication of socialist theory in new realities which were not foreseen by the founders of Marxism.

The fact that socialist power was first won in the most backward outpost of European capitalism, without a democratic political tradition, played no small part in the way it was shaped. To this must be added the years of isolation, economic siege and armed intervention which, in the immediate post-October period, led to the virtual decimation of the Soviet Union's relatively small working class. In the course of time the party leadership was transformed into a command post with an overbearing centralism and very little democracy, even in relation to its own membership.

Most of the other socialist countries emerged 30 years later in the shadow of the cold war. Some of them owed a great deal to Soviet power for their very creation and survival, and the majority, for a great part of their history, followed the Stalinist economic and political model. Communists outside the socialist world and revolutionaries engaged in anti-colonial movements were the beneficiaries of generous aid and consistent acts of internationalist solidarity. They correctly saw in Soviet power a bulwark against their enemies and either did not believe, or did not want to believe, the way in which aspects of socialism were being debased.

All this helps to explain, but in no way to justify, the awful grip which Stalinism came to exercise in every sector of the socialist world and the whole international communist movement. It was a grip which, if loosened by either parties (e.g. Yugoslavia) or individuals within parties, usually led to isolation and excommunication.

We make no attempt here to answer the complex question of why so may millions of genuine socialists and revolutionaries became such blind worshippers in the temple of the cult of the personality. Suffice it to say that the strength of this conformism lay, partly, in an ideological conviction that those whom history had appointed as the custodians of humankind's communist future seemed to be building on foundations prepared by the founding fathers of Marxism. And there was not enough in classical Marxist theory about the nature of the transition period to provide a detailed guide to the future.

This under-developed state of classical Marxist theory in relation to the form and structure of future socialist society lent itself easily to the elaboration of dogma which could claim general 'legitimacy' from a selection of quotes from the masters. But the founders of Marxism

> 'never invented specific forms and mechanisms for the development of the new society. They elaborated its socialist ideal ... they provided the historically transient character of capitalism and the historical need for transition to a new stage of social development. As for the **structure of the future society to replace capitalism, they discussed it in the most general terms** and mostly from the point of view of fundamental principles' (my emphasis)[10]

In particular, let us consider two issues:

a) socialism and democracy, and the related question
b) social and economic alienation under socialism.

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

Marxist ideology saw the future state as 'a direct democracy in which the task of governing would not be the preserve of a state bureaucracy'[11] and as 'an association in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all'.[12] **How did it happen that, in the name of this most humane and liberating ideology, the bureaucracy became so all-powerful and the individual was so suffocated?**

To find, at least, the beginnings of an answer we need to look at four related areas:

a) The thesis of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' which was used as the theoretical rationalisation for unbridled authoritarianism.
b) The steady erosion of people's power both at the level of government and mass social organisations.
c) The perversion of the concept of the party as a vanguard of the working class, and

d) Whether, at the end of the day, socialist democracy can find real expression in a single-party state.

a) Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The concept of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was dealt with rather thinly by Marx as 'a transition to a classless society' without much further definition.[13] For his part Engels, drawing on Marx's analysis of the Paris Commune, claimed that it indeed 'was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'.[14] The Paris Commune of 1871 was an exceptional social experience which brought into being a kind of workers' city-state (by no means socialist-led) in which, for a brief moment, most functions of the state (both legislative and executive) were directly exercised by a popular democratic assembly.

The concept of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was elaborated by Lenin in *State and Revolution* in the very heat of the revolutionary transformation in 1917. Lenin quoted Engels approvingly when he said that 'the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist' (Engels, Letter to Bebel). In the meanwhile, in contrast to capitalist democracy which is 'curtailed, wretched, false ... for the rich, for the minority ... the dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will, for the first time, **create democracy ... for the majority** ... along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority.'[15]

Lenin envisaged that working-class power would be based on the kind of democracy of the Commune, but he did not address, in any detail, the nature of **established socialist civil society**, including fundamental questions such as the relationship between the party, state, people's elected repesentatives, social organisations, etc. Understandably, the dominant preoccupation at the time was with the seizure of power, its protection in the face of the expected counter-revolutionary assault, the creation of 'democracy for the majority' and the 'suppression of the minority of exploiters'.

Rosa Luxemburg said, in a polemic with Lenin:

> 'Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party — however numerous they may be — is not freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently ... its effectiveness vanishes when "freedom" becomes a special privilege.'[16]

These words may not have been appropriate as policy (which is what Luxemburg argued for) in the special conditions of the phase immediately after the seizure of power in October 1917. **Without a limitation on democracy there was no way the revolution could have defended itself in the civil war and the direct intervention by the whole of the capitalist world.** But Luxemburg's concept of freedom is surely incontrovertible once a society has achieved stability.

Lenin clearly assumed that whatever repression may be necessary in the immediate aftermath of the revolution would be relatively mild and short-lived. The state and its traditional instruments of force would begin to 'wither away' almost as soon as socialist power had been won and the process of widening and deepening democracy would begin. Lenin was referring to the transitional socialist state (and not to the future communist society) when he emphasised that **there would be an extension of 'democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a special machine of suppression will begin to disappear.....** it is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word (because) the suppression of the minority of exploiters... is easy, simple', entailing relatively little bloodshed, and hardly needing a machine or a special apparatus other than 'the simple organisation of the armed people (such as the Soviets)...'[17]

We know that all this is a far cry from what happened in the decades which followed. The whole process was put in reverse. The complete 'suppression of the exploiters' was followed by the strengthening of the instruments of state suppression and **the narrowing of democracy for the majority of the population, including the working class.**

The anti-Leninist theory advanced (in the name of Lenin) to 'justify' this process was that the class struggle becomes more rather than less intense with the entrenchment of socialism. In some respects this became a self-fulfilling prophecy; a retreat from democratic norms intensified social contradictions which, in turn, became the excuse for an intensification of the 'class struggle'.

One of the key rationalisations for this thesis was the undoubted threat, even after the end of the civil war, posed by imperialism and fascism to the very survival of the Soviet Union and the continuing Western conspiracies to prevent the spread of socialist power after 1945. But events have demonstrated that if the survival of the Soviet Union was at risk from the fascist onslaught it was, among other reasons, also the result of damage wrought to the whole Soviet social fabric (including its army) by the authoritarian bureaucracy. And if Western 'conspiracies' have succeeded in threatening the very survival of socialism in places like Eastern Europe, it is the narrowing rather than the extension of democracy which has played into their hands.

The term 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' reflected the historical truth that in class-divided social formations state power is ultimately exercised by, and in the interests of, the class which owns and controls the means of production. It is in this sense that capitalist formations were described as a 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie' whose rule would be replaced by a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' during the socialist transition period. In the latter case power would, however, be exercised in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and should lead to an ever-expanding genuine democracy — both political and economic.

On reflection, the choice of the word 'dictatorship' to describe this type of society certainly opens the way to ambiguities and distortions.

The abandonment of the term by most communist parties, including ours, does not, in all cases, imply a rejection of the historical validity of its essential content. But, the way the term came to be abused bore little resemblance to Lenin's original concept. It was progressively denuded of its intrinsic democratic content and came to signify, in practice, a dictatorship of a party bureaucracy. For Lenin the repressive aspect of the concept had impending relevance in relation to the need for the revolution to defend itself against counter-revolutionary terror in the immediate post-revolution period.[18] He was defending, against the utopianism of the anarchists, the limited retention of repressive apparatus.

But, unfortunately, practices justified by the exigencies of the earlier phases became a permanent feature of the new society. As time went on the gap between socialism and democracy widened; the nature and role of the social institutions (such as the Soviets, the party and mass organisations) which had previously given substance to popular power and socialist democracy, were steadily eroded.

b) Elected Bodies and Mass Organisations

The steady erosion of the powers and representative character of **elected institutions** led to the alienation of a considerable portion of society from political life. The electorate had no effective right to choose its representatives. Gone were the days when the party had to engage in a political contest to win a majority in the Soviets. The legislative organs did not, in any case, have genuine control over legislation; by their nature they could only act as rubber stamps for decisions which had already been taken by party structures. The executive and judicial organs were, for all practical purposes, under the direct control of the party bureaucracy. **In practice the majority of the people had very few levers with which to determine the course of economic or social life.**

Democracy in the mass organisations was also more formal than real. The enormous membership figures told us very little about the extent to which the individual trade unionist, youth or woman was able to participate in the control or direction of their respective organisations. At the end of the day these organisations were turned into transmission belts for decisions taken elsewhere and the individual members were little more than cogs of the vast bureaucratic machine.

The trade union movement became an adjunct of the state and party. Workers had no meaningful role in determining the composition of the top leadership which was, in substance, answerable to the party apparatus. For all practical purposes the right to strike did not exist. The extremely thin dividing line between management and the trade union collective on the factory floor detracted from the real autonomy of trade unions. Apart from certain welfare functions, they tended, more and more, to act like Western-style production councils, but without the advantage of having to answer for their role to an independent trade union under the democratic control of its membership.

Much of the above applied to the **women's and youth organisations**. Instead of being guided by the aspirations and interests of their constituencies, they were turned into support bases for the ongoing dictates of the state and party apparatus.[19]

c) The Party

In the immediate aftermath of the October revolution, the Bolshevik party shared power with other political and social tendencies, including Mensheviks and a section of the left Social Revolutionaries. In the elections for the constituent assembly in 1918, the Bolsheviks received less than a third of the popular vote.[20]

There may be moments in the life of a revolution which justify a postponement of full democratic processes. And we do not address the question of whether the Bolsheviks were justified in taking a monopoly of state power during the extraordinary period of both internal and external assault on the gains of the revolution. Suffice it to say that the single-party state and the guiding and leading role of the party subsequently became permanent features of socialist rule and were entrenched in the constitutions of most socialist states.[21] **Henceforth the parties were 'vanguards' by law and not necessarily by virtue of social endorsement.**

This was accompanied by negative transformations within the party itself. Under the guise of 'democratic centralism' inner-party democracy was almost completely suffocated by centralism. All effective power was concentrated in the hands of a Political Bureau or, in some cases, a single, all-powerful personality. The control of this 'leadership' by the party as a whole was purely formal. In most cases the composition of the highest organ — the congress which finalised policy and elected the leadership — was manipulated from the top.

The Central Committee (elected by variations of a 'list' system emanating from the top) had only the most tenuous jurisdiction over the Political Bureau. Within this latter body a change of leaders resembled a palace coup rather than a democratic process; invariably the changes were later unanimously endorsed.

The invigorating impact of the contest of ideas in Marxist culture was stifled. In practice, the basic party unit was there to explain, defend, exhort and support policies in whose formulation they rarely participated. The concept of consensus effectively stifled dissent and promoted the completely unnatural appearance of unanimity on everything. Fundamental differences were either suppressed or silenced by the self-imposed discipline of so-called democratic centralism. In these conditions the democratic development of party policy became a virtual impossibility.

d) The Single-Party State

Hegel coined the profound aphorism that truth is usually born a heresy and dies as a superstition. With no real right to dissent by citizens or even by the mass of the party membership, truth became more and more inhibited by deadening dogma; a sort of catechism took the place of creative thought. And, within the confines of a single-party state, the alternative to active conformism was either silence or the risk of punishment as 'an enemy of the people'.

Is this suppression of the right to dissent inherent in the single-party state? Gorbachev recently made the point that:

> 'Developing the independent activities of the masses and prompting democratisation of all spheres of life under a one-party system is a noble but **very difficult mission** for the party. And a great deal will depend on how we deal with it'.[22]

Gorbachev's thought has special relevance to many parts of our own continent where the one-party system abounds. It straddles both capitalist and socialist-oriented countries and in most of them it is used to prevent, among other things, the democratic organisation of the working people either politically or in trade unions.

This is not to say that all one-party states in our continent have in fact turned out to be authoritarian; indeed some of them are headed by the most humane leaders who passionately believe in democratic processes. Nor can we dismiss the role they have played in preventing tribal, ethnic and regional fragmentation, combating externally-inspired banditry, and correcting some of the grave distortions inherited from the colonial period.

In relation to the socialist perspective, it is sometimes forgotten that the concept of the single-party state is nowhere to be found in classical Marxist theory. **And we have had sufficient experience of one-party rule in various parts of the world to perhaps conclude that the 'mission' to promote real democracy under a one-party system is not just difficult but, in the long run, impossible.**

But, in any case, where a single-party state is in place and there is not even democracy and accountability within the party, it becomes a short-cut to a political tyranny over the whole of society. And at different points in time this is what happened in most socialist states.

The resulting sense of **political alienation** of the great majority of the people was not the only negative feature of existing socialism. Of equal importance was the failure to overcome the sense of **economic alienation** inherited from the capitalist past.

SOCIALIST ECONOMIC ALIENATION

The concept of alienation expressed 'the objective transformation of the activity of man and of its results into an independent force, dominating him and inimical to him...'[23] Alienation has its origins in class-dominated society based on private property. Under capitalism, in the course of the production process, the worker himself 'always produces objective wealth, in the inform of capital, an alien power that dominates and exploits him'.[24] Thus, the exploited classes objectively create and recreate the conditions of their own domination and exploitation. Consciousness of this fuels the class struggle against capitalist relations of production.

The aim of communism is to achieve the complete mastery and control over social forces which humanity itself has generated but which, under capitalism, have become objectified as alien power which is seen to stand above society and exercises mastery over it. Communism, according to Marx, involves the creation of a society in which 'socialised humanity, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, **bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power'.**[25]

The relevance of all this for our discussion is that only genuine socialist relations of production can begin the whole process which will lead to the **de-alienation** of society as a whole and generate the formation of a **new 'socialist person'**. The process of de-alienation — whose completion must await the stage of communism — cannot be advanced by education and ideology alone; conditions must be created which lead progressively to real **participation and control** by each individual (as part of 'socialised humanity') over social life in all its aspects.

The destruction of the political and economic power of capital are merely first steps in the direction of de-alienation. **The transfer of legal ownership of productive property from private capital to the state does not, on its own, create fully socialist relations of production, nor does it always significantly change the work-life of the producer.** The power to control the producers' work-life and to dispose of the products of labour is now in the hands of a 'committee' rather than a board of directors. And if the 'committee' separates itself from the producers by a bureaucratic wall without democratic accountability, its role is perceived no differently from that of the board of directors. It remains a force over which the producer has no real control and which (despite the absence of economic exploitation of the capitalist variety) dominates him as an alien power.

State property itself has to be transformed into social property. This involves reorganising social life as a whole so that the producers, at least as a collective, have a real say not only in the production of social wealth but also in its disposal. In the words of Gorbachev, what is required is **'not only formal but also real socialisation and the real turning of the working people into the masters of all socialised production'.**[26]

De-alienation requires that the separation between social wealth creation and social wealth appropriation and distribution is ended **and society as a whole is in control of all three processes.** A degree of self-management (at the level of individual enterprises) is only one ingredient in the process of de-alienation; conditions must be created making possible full popular control over **all society's institutions of power** not just as a 'constitutional right' but as a reality.

Alienation in Existing Socialism

The unavoidable inheritance from the past and the most serious distortions of socialist norms in most of the socialist countries combined to perpetuate alienation, albeit in a new form. **Private ownership** of the main means of production was replaced by **state ownership**. Private capital, as an alien power, no longer dominated or exploited the producer. But without real socialisation the key condition for de-alienation continued to be absent.

The immediate producers were given very little real control or participation in economic life beyond their own personal physical and/or mental exertions. In general, the over-centralised and commandist economies of the socialist world helped to entrench a form of 'socialist' alienation. **At the purely economic level this form of alienation often turned out to be the worst of both worlds.**

Under capitalism economic compulsion sanctified by the rule of capital (threatened unemployment, etc.) plays an important role in providing the 'incentive' for rising productivity despite alienation by workers from the products of their labour. Capitalist economic levers based on the sanctity of private property are, at the end of the day, not over-concerned with the problems of alienation and more easily provide the incentive (in relation to the workers) that 'he who does not work, neither shall he eat'.

Under socialism guaranteed employment and the amount of remuneration did not always depend upon quality, productivity or efficiency, opening the way to parasitism at the point of production. Reward based on the socialist maxim of 'to each according to his contribution' can obviously play a part in increasing productivity. **But for socialist society as a whole to really come into its own requires an incentive based on the producer's real participation in the mechanisms of social control over the products of his/her labour; a feeling that the means of production and its products are his or hers as part of society.** This incentive was too often absent and stood in the way of the process of de-alienation.

Episodes of direct compulsion against producers, such as the forced collectivisation of the early 1930's and the extensive use of convict labour as a direct state and party exercise, made things worse. Like all forms of primitive accumulation, these episodes created a most profound sense of alienation whose negative consequences are still being felt. Pure exhortation and political 'mobilisation' did not, in the long run, prevent the onset of stagnation. Alienation, albeit in a different form, continued and inhibited the full potential of socialist economic advance.

There were, of course, other negative factors which require more extensive examination than is possible here. These include policies based on what has been called the 'big bang theory of socialism' which ignored the historical fact that many of the ingredients of social systems which succeed one another — and this includes the change from capitalism to socialism — cannot be separated by a Chinese Wall.

The economy of a country the day after the workers take over is exactly the same as it was the day before, and it cannot be transformed merely by proclamation. The neglect of this truism resulted, now and then, in a primitive egalitarianism which reached lunatic proportions under the Pol Pot regime, the absence of cost-accounting, a dismissive attitude to commodity production and the law of value during the transition period, the premature abandonment of any role for market forces, a doctrinaire approach to the question of collectivisation, etc.

But rectification of these areas alone would not establish the material and moral superiority of socialism as a way of life for humanity. Only the creation of real socialist relations of production will give birth to the socialist man and woman whose active participation in all the social processes will ensure that socialism reaches its full potential and moves towards a classless communist society. Under existing socialism alienation has persisted because of a less than full control and participation by the people in these processes.

In short, the way forward is through thorough-going democratic socialism; a way which can only be charted by a party which wins its support through democratic persuasion and ideological contest and not, as has too often happened up to now, by a claim of right.

A LOOK AT OURSELVES

The commandist and bureaucratic approaches which took root during Stalin's time affected communist parties throughout the world, including our own. **We cannot disclaim our share of the responsibility for the spread of the personality cult and a mechanical embrace of Soviet domestic and foreign policies, some of which discredited the cause of socialism.** We kept silent for too long after the 1956 Khruschev revelations.

It would, of course, be naive to imagine that a movement can, at a stroke, shed all the mental baggage it has carried from the past. And our 7th Congress emphasised the need for on-going vigilance. It noted some isolated reversions to the past, including attempts to engage in intrigue and factional activity in fraternal organisations, sectarian attitudes towards some non-party colleagues, and sloganised dismissals of views which do not completely accord with ours.

The implications for socialism of the Stalinist distortions have not yet been evenly understood throughout our ranks. We need to continue the search for a better balance between advancing party policy as a collective and the toleration of on-going debate and even constructive dissent.

We do not pretend that our party's changing postures in the direction of democratic socialism are the results only of our own independent evolution. Our shift undoubtedly owes a prime debt to the process of perestroika and glasnost which was so courageously unleashed under Gorbachev's inspiration. Closer to home, the democratic spirit which dominated the re-emerged trade union movement from the early 1970's onwards, also made its impact.

But we can legitimately claim that in certain fundamental respects our indigenous revolutionary practice long ago ceased to be guided by Stalinist concepts. This is the case particularly in relation to the way the party performed its role as a working class vanguard, its relations with fraternal organisations and representatives of other social forces and, above all, its approach to the question of democracy in the post-apartheid state and in a future socialist South Africa.

The Party as a Vanguard and Inner-Party Democracy

We have always believed (and we continue to do so) that it is indispensable for the working class to have an independent political instrument which safeguards its role in the democratic revolution and which leads it towards an eventual classless society. But such leadership must be won rather than imposed. Our claim to represent the historic aspirations of the workers does not give us an absolute right to lead them or to exercise control over society as a whole in their name.

Our new programme asserts that a communist party does not earn the title of vanguard merely by proclaiming it. Nor does its claim to be the upholder of Marxism give it a monopoly of political wisdom or a natural right to exclusive control of the struggle. We can only earn our place as a vanguard force by superior efforts of leadership and devotion to the cause of liberation by demonstrating its superiority as a theoretical guide to revolutionary practice.

This approach to the vanguard concept has not, as we know, always been adhered to in world revolutionary practice and in an earlier period we too were infected by the distortion. **But, in our case, the shift which has taken place in our conception of 'vanguard' is by no means a post-Gorbachev phenomenon.** The wording on this question in our new programme is taken almost verbatim from our Central Committee's 1970 report on organisation.

The 1970 document reiterated the need to safeguard, both in the letter and the spirit, the independence of the political expressions of other social forces whether economic or national. It rejected the old purist and domineering concept that all those who do not agree with the party are necessarily enemies of the working class. And it saw no conflict between our understanding of the concept of vanguard and the acceptance of the African National Congress as the head of the liberation alliance.

Despite the inevitable limitations which illegality imposed on our inner-party democratic processes, the principles of accountability and electivity of all higher organs were substantially adhered to. Seven underground Congresses of our party have been held since 1953. The delegates to Congress from the lower organs were elected without lists from above and always constituted a majority. The incoming Central Committees were elected by a secret ballot without any form of direct or indirect 'guidance' to the delegates. **In other words, the Leninist concept of democratic centralism has not been abused to entrench authoritarian leadership practices.**

Our structures, down to the lowest units, have been increasingly encouraged to assess and question leadership pronouncements in a critical spirit and the views of the membership are invariably canvassed before finalising basic policy documents. Our 7th Congress, which adopted our new programme, *The Path to Power*, was a model of democratic consultation and spirited debate.

Special procedures designed to exclude suspected enemy agents as delegates to Congress limited complete free choice. But, in practice, these limitations affected a negligible percentage. Overall, despite the security risks involved in the clandestine conditions, the will of our membership finds democratic expression. **This spirit of democracy also informs our relationship with fraternal political forces and our approach to the political framework of a post-liberation South Africa.**

Relations with Fraternal Organisations

As we have already noted, one of the most serious casualties in the divide which developed between democracy and socialism was in the one-sided relationship between the ruling parties and the mass organisations. In order to prevent such a distortion in a post-apartheid South Africa we have, for example, set out in our draft Workers' Charter that:

> 'Trade unions and their federation shall be completely independent and answerable only to the decisions of their members or affiliates, democratically arrived at. **No political party, state organ or enterprise, whether public, private or mixed, shall directly or indirectly interfere with such independence.'**

The substance of this approach is reflected in the way our party has in fact conducted itself for most of its underground existence.

Our 1970 extended Central Committee meeting reiterated the guidelines which inform our relations with fraternal organisations and other social forces. Special emphasis was once again given to the need to safeguard, both in the letter and in the spirit, the independence of the political expressions of other social forces, whether economic or national.

We do not regard the trade union or the national movement as mere conduits for our policies. Nor do we attempt to advance our policy positions through intrigue or manipulation. Our relationship with these organisations is based on complete respect for their independence, integrity and inner-democracy. In so far as our influence is felt, it is the result of open submissions of policy positions and the impact of individual communists who win respect as among the most loyal, the most devoted and ideologically clear members of these organisations.

Old habits die hard and among the most pernicious of these is the purist concept that all those who do not agree with the party are necessarily enemies of socialism. This leads to a substitution of name-calling and jargon for healthy debate with non-party activists. As already mentioned, our 7th Congress noted some isolated reversions along these lines and resolved to combat such tendencies.

But, in general, the long-established and appreciable move away from old-style commandism and secretarianism has won for our party the admiration and support of a growing number of non-communist revolutionary activists in the broad workers' and national movement. We also consider it appropriate to canvass the views of such activists in the formulation of certain aspects of our policy. For example, we submitted our preliminary conception of the contents of a Workers' Charter for critical discussion not only in our own ranks but throughout the national and trade union movements.

Democracy and the Future

Our party's programme holds firmly to a post-apartheid state which will guarantee all citizens the basic rights and freedoms of organisation, speech, thought, press, movement, residence, conscience and religion; full trade union rights for all workers including the right to strike, and one person one vote in free and democratic elections. **These freedoms constitute the very essence of our national liberation and socialist objectives and they clearly imply political pluralism.**

Both for these historical reasons and because experience has shown that an institutionalised one-party state has a strong propensity for authoritarianism; **a multi-party post-apartheid democracy, both in the national democratic and socialist phases, is desirable.**

We believe that post-apartheid state power must clearly vest in the elected representatives of the people and not, directly or indirectly, in the administrative command of a party. The relationship which evolves between political parties and state structures must not, in any way, undermine the sovereignty of elected bodies.

We also believe that if there is real democracy in the post-apartheid state, the way will be open for a peaceful progression towards our party's ultimate objective — a socialist South Africa. This approach is consistent with the Marxist view — not always adhered to in practice — that the working class must win the majority to its side: as long as no violence is used against the people there is no other road to power.[27]

It follows that, in truly democratic conditions, it is perfectly legitimate and desirable for a party claiming to be the political instrument of the working class to attempt to lead its constituency in **democratic contest for political power** against other parties and groups representing other social forces. And if it wins, it must be constitutionally required, from time to time, to go back to the people for a renewed mandate. The alternative to this is self-perpetuating power with all its implications for corruption and dictatorship.

Conclusion

We dare not underestimate the damage that has been wrought to the cause of socialism by the distortions we have touched upon. We, however, continue to have complete faith that socialism represents the most rational, just and democratic way for human beings to relate to one another.

- ***Humankind can never attain real freedom until a society has been built in which no person has the freedom to exploit another person.***
- ***The bulk of humanity's resources will never be used for the good of humanity until they are in public ownership and under democratic control.***
- ***The ultimate aim of socialism, to eliminate all class inequalities, occupies a prime place in the body of civilised ethics even before Marx.***
- ***The all-round development of the individual and the creation of opportunities for every person to express his or her talents to the full can only find ultimate expression in a society which dedicates itself to people rather than profit.***

The opponents of socialism are very vocal about what they call the failure of socialism in Africa.[28] But they say little, if anything, about Africa's real failure; the failures of capitalism. **Over 90 percent of our continent's people live out their wretched and repressed lives in stagnating and declining capitalist-orientated economies.** International capital, to whom most of these countries are mortgaged, virtually regards cheap bread, free education and full employment as economic crimes. Western outcries against violations of human rights are muted when they occur in countries with a capitalist orientation.

The way forward for the whole of humanity lies within a socialist framework guided by genuine socialist humanitarianism and not within a capitalist system which entrenches economic and social inequalities as a way of life. Socialism can undoubtedly be made to work without the negative practices which have distorted many of its key objectives.

But mere faith in the future of socialism is not enough. The lessons of past failures have to be learnt. Above all, we have to ensure that its fundamental tenet — socialist democracy — occupies a rightful place in all future practice.

References

1. It is, for example, sad to record that among the early foreign policy initiatives of the new government in Hungary was to play host to South Africa's foreign minister. By doing this it has, without even the diplomatic niceties of consulting with the reperesentatives of the repressed and dominated majority, moved away from one of the most humanitarian aspects of the policies of the socialist world, i.e. to be in the vanguard of those who shun apartheid.

2. Among other things, statistics recently published in *The Economist* (UK) show that in the Soviet Union — after only 70 years of socialist endeavour in what was one of the most backward countries in the capitalist world — there are more graduate engineers than in the US, more graduate research scientists than in Japan and more medical doctors per head than in Western Europe. It also produced more steel, fuel and energy than any other country (The World in the 1990s; Economist publication). How many capitalist countries can match the achievements of the socialist world in the provision of social security, child care, the ending of cultural backwardness, and so on? There is certainly no country in the world which can beat Cuba's record in the sphere of health care.

3. Marx used the term 'primitive accumulation' to describe the **original** process of capitalist accumulation which, he maintained, was not the result of abstinence but rather of acts (including brigandage) such as the expropriation of the peasantry as happened during the British Enclosures (*Capital* Volume 1, Part VII). Preobrazhensky in *The New Economics* (1926) talked about 'primitive socialist accumulation' involving the expropriation of resources from the better-off classes to generate capital for socialist industrial development. Here, the term is used to describe the arbitrary measures taken against the Soviet peasantry to forcibly 'enclose' them into collectives.

4. Socialism, as a transition phase to communism, is not based on full egalitarianism. But clearly the socialist maxim 'to each according to his contribution' is not applied absolutely in a socialist society which devotes a large slice of its resources to social services, subsidising basic necessities, and implementing the human right of guaranteed employment. **The middle strata in socialist society are inevitably worse off than their counterparts in the West. Access to the flesh-pots of consumer goods (which the West produces for the upper crust in almost mind-bending variations) is more restricted when society tries to use its surplus to achieve a more just distribution of wealth.**

5. The *New Yorker*, January 23, 1989.

6. In the recent period a number of European and African political parties have 'officially' abandoned Marxism-Leninism as a theoretical guide. In the case of FRELIMO, the decision appears to be the result of second thoughts on what may, in the circumstances, have been a premature transformation of the movement into a communist vanguard. But in the case of some Western parties the decision seems to be a response (with undoubted electoral implications) to the distortions of the socialist experience rather than a reasoned conclusion that Marxism is not a viable tool in the socialist endeavour. **A leading Soviet academic** (reported in *Work in Progress* No. 48, July 1987, p.7) **has predicted that South Africa has no chance of becoming socialist for a century.**

7. This must be understood as providing the **immediate** explanation of the way **major** social change manifests itself in a situation in which the relations of production have become obstacles to the development of productive forces.

8. This type of formulation is preferred to the one occasionally used by Gorbachev that there are certain universal human values which take priority over class values. This latter formulation tends to detract from the inter-dependence of working class and human morality. It also perhaps goes too far in separating morality from its class connection, even though it is clear that the assertion of certain values can be in the mutual interests of otherwise contending classes.

9. See Lenin, State and Revolution, *Selected Works* pp.203-4.

10. M. Gorbachev in *Pravda* November 26, 1989.

11. Marx: *Civil War in France.*

12. *Communist Manifesto.*

13. Letter to J. Wedemeyer, see also 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', *Selected Works*, p.331.

14. *Introduction to Civil War in France.*

15. *Selected Works*, Volume Two, pp.302-3.

16. *The Russian Revolution*, p.79.

17. *Selected Works*, Volume Two, pp.303-4.

18. It is instructive to note how Western anti-Marxists and liberals understood and even welcomed the imposition of the most blatant dictatorial methods to deal with the counter-revolutionaries in the immediate aftermath of the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime.

19. A stark illustration of this is the failure of any of the women's organisations in the socialist countries to mount agitation against the continuing inequalities between men and women in key social and political sectors. It is utterly inconceivable that the women's organisations could have failed to notice the continuing male-oriented structure of the family and the overwhelming male domination (more so than even in the capitalist West) of all structures of political power.

20. The total number of votes cast was 36.26 million. Of the major parties, the Social Revolutionaries received 20.9 million, the Bolsheviks 9.02 million, the Cadets 1.8 million, the Mensheviks 0.6 million and the rest was shared between 20 other parties.

21. Some of the socialist countries were ruled by a front but in substance the allies of the communist parties had little, if any, power or effective autonomy.

22. *Pravda* November 26, 1989.

23. Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, p.716, Penguin Books Edition.

24. AP Ogurtsov, *Soviet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

25. *Capital*, Volume 3, Chapter 48.

26. *Pravda*, September 30, 1989.

27. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Volume 2, p.36.

28. They conveniently ignore the fact that most of the countries which tried to create conditions for the building of socialism faced unending civil war, aggression and externally-inspired banditry; a situation in which it is hardly possible to build any kind of stable social formation — capitalist or socialist.

They Gave Their Lives For The Most Treasured Values Of The Revolution

Fidel Castro's Tribute to Cuba's Fallen

The following speech was made by President Fidel Castro at the memorial ceremony held at El Cacahual on December 7 1989 "for the Cuban internationalists who fell while carrying out honourable military and civilian missions".

Present at the ceremony, amongst others, was José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the MPLA-Party of Labour and the People's Republic of Angola.

President Castro said:

DECEMBER 7, THE DATE ON WHICH ANTONIO MACEO, the most illustrious of all our soldiers, and his young aide-de-camp were killed, has always been very meaningful for all Cubans. Their remains lie here. By choosing this day for laying to rest the remains of our heroic internationalist fighters who have died in different parts of the world — mainly in Africa, the land of birth of Maceo's ancestors and and many of our forebears — we make it a day for honoring all Cubans who gave their lives while defending their country and all mankind. Thus, patriotism and internationalism — two of man's most treasured values — will be joined forever in Cuba's history.

Perhaps, someday, a monument will be erected not far from this site to honour them. The remains of all internationalists who died while carrying out their missions are being laid to rest in their hometowns all over Cuba right now.

The imperialists thought we would conceal the number of our men killed in Angola during that complex, 14-year-long mission — as if it were a dishonour or a discredit for the Revolution. For a long time they dreamed that the lives that were lost had been to no purpose, as if those who died for a just cause had died in vain. Even if victory were the only way to measure the value of men's sacrifices in their legitimate struggle, they also returned victorious.

The Spartans used to tell their fighters to return with their shields or on them. Our troops are returning with their shields.

Still, it is not my intention, on this solemn occasion, to boast of our achievements or to humiliate anyone — not even those who were our adversaries, our country sought neither glory nor military prestige.

We always applied the principle of achieving our goals with the lowest possible number of casualties. To do this, we had to be strong, unemotional and always willing to do our utmost.

All of our soldiers knew that the whole country supported them.

All of our soldiers knew that the whole country supported them and that all of us were concerned about their health and safety.

When political and diplomatic efforts became feasible for attaining the final goals, we did not hesitate to use political and diplomatic channels, and, while we always employed the necessary firmness, at no time during the negotiation process were we arrogant or boastful.We were flexible whenever flexibility was advisable and fair.

The final stage of the war in Angola was the most difficult. It demanded all of our country's determination, tenacity and fighting spirit in support of our Angolan brothers.

In fulfilling this duty of solidarity, not only to Angola but also to our own troops fighting under difficult conditions there, the Revolution did not hesitate in risking everything. When the imperialist threats against our own country became very serious, we did not hesitate in sending a large part of our most modern and sophisticated military equipment to the Southern Front of the People's Republic of Angola. Over 50,000 Cuban troops were in that sister nation — a truly impressive figure, in view of the distance and our country's size and resources. It was a veritable feat by our Revolutionary Armed Forces and our people. Such chapters of altruism and international solidarity are very infrequent.

Therefore, we greatly appreciate the fact that José Eduardo dos Santos is attending this ceremony. It was an entirely spontaneous gesture: "I want to be with you on this occasion," he said. Also spontaneously, as soon as they learned of this ceremony, only a few days ago, the leaders of Ethiopia, SWAPO and other countries and revolutionary organisations stated that they wanted to send representatives to be here with us today when we laid to rest all of our internationalists who died in Africa and in other lands.

There are historic events that nothing and no one can obliterate. There are revolutionary examples that the best men and women of future generations, both within and outside our country, will always remember. This is one of them, yet we should not be the ones to judge it; history will do so.

We will never forget that the soldiers of the Angolan armed forces were our comrades in arms. Tens of thousands of the best sons and daughters of that nation lost their lives in the struggle. Our unity and close cooperation made victory possible.

We also had the honour of fighting alongside the courageous sons and daughters of Namibia, the patriots of Guinea-Bissau and the unmatched Ethiopian soldiers. Years earlier, in the difficult period immediately following Algeria's independence, our internationalist fighters were at her side — as, later, they helped defend Syria, another sister Arab nation that was a victim of foreign aggression and requested our cooperation.

Every legitimate African cause received our people's support

Every legitimate African cause received our people's support. Che Guevara and a large group of Cuban revolutionaries fought against white mercenaries in the eastern part of what is now Zaire, and doctors and teachers are working in the Saharawi Republic now, helping its people, who are fighting for their freedom.

All of these countries were then or are now independent, and those that have not yet won their independence will do so, sooner or later.

In just a few years, our fighters wrote an outstanding chapter of solidarity of which our people can be proud. Men from other countries also fought at our side in our own struggles for independence. Maximo Gómez, who was born in the Dominican Republic, was the most outstanding of all and due to his extraordinary merits became the chief of our Liberation Army. In the years prior to our Revolution, a thousand Cubans organised by the first Communist Party fought in Spain to defend the Republic. They wrote memorable chapters of heroism which Pablo de la Torriente Brau recorded for history until death put an early end to the life of that brilliant revolutionary journalist.

That was how our internationalist spirit was forged. It reached its zenith with the Socialist Revolution. Wherever Cuban internationalists have gone, they have set examples of respect for the dignity and sovereignty of those countries. The trust that those peoples have placed in them is the result of their irreproachable behaviour. Their exemplary selflessness and altruism is remembered everywhere.

A prominent African statesman once said in a meeting of leaders of the region, "Cuban fighters are ready to give their lives for the liberation of our countries. The only thing they will take back with them, in exchange for that assistance to our freedom and our people's progress, are the bodies of those who died fighting for freedom." That continent, that experienced centuries of exploitation and plunder, has recognised the full extent of the unselfish nature of our internationalist contribution.

Peace has been achieved with honour, and their sacrifices and efforts have been amply rewarded

Now, our battle-seasoned troops are returning victoriously. The joyful, happy, proud faces of mothers, wives, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters — of all our people — welcome them with affection and love. Peace has been achieved with honour, and their sacrifices and efforts have been amply rewarded. Our sleep is no longer disturbed by constant concern over the fate of our troops fighting thousands of kilometres from their land.

The enemy thought that our troops' return would cause social problems, since it would be impossible to provide jobs for them all. Most of those men — aside from those who have made the military a career — had jobs here in Cuba and will go back to their old jobs or be given better ones. None of them has been forgotten. Many of them already knew where they would be working even before returning home.

Of all the young men in military service who shortly after being graduated from high school volunteered for the honour of going to Angola on an internationalist mission, none have had to wait before going back to school or joining the ranks of our working people.

Our country is working hard, implementing ambitious socio-economic development programmes. The irrational laws of capitalism do not guide our actions, and every man and woman in our country has a place in education, production or the services.

No close relatives of those who died while fulfilling their mission or who suffered serious injuries have been forgotten. They have received, are receiving and will continue to receive all the care and consideration due them for the sacrifices made by their loved ones and for their own devoted, selfless, generous, even heroic behaviour.

The hundreds of thousands of Cubans who carried out military or civilian internationalist missions have earned the respect of present and future generations. They have honourably upheld our people's glorious fighting and internationalist traditions.

On their return, they have found their country engaged in a tremendous struggle for development while continuing to confront the criminal imperialist blockade with exemplary dignity. This is in addition to the current crisis in the socialist camp, from which we can only expect negative economic consequences for our country.

People in most of those countries aren't talking about the anti-imperialist struggle or the principles of internationalism. Those words aren't even mentioned in their press. Such concepts have been virtually removed from political dictionaries there. Meanwhile, capitalist values are gaining unheard-of strength in those societies.

Capitalism means unequal terms of trade with the peoples of the Third World, the exacerbation of individual selfishness and national chauvinism, the reign of irrationality and chaos in investment and production, the ruthless sacrifice of the peoples on behalf of blind economic laws, the survival of the fittest, the exploitation of man by man, a situation of everybody for himself. In the social sphere, capitalism implies many more things: prostitution; drugs; gambling; begging; unemployment; abysmal inequalities among citizens; the depletion of natural resources; the poisoning of the air, seas, rivers and forests; and especially the plundering of the underdeveloped nations by the industrialised capitalist countries. In the past, it meant colonialism; now, it means neocolonising billions of human beings, using the most sophisticated — and the cheapest, most effective and most ruthless — economic and political methods.

Capitalism and its methods can never pull Socialism out of its present difficulties

Capitalism, its market economy, its value, its categories and its methods can never pull socialism out of its present difficulties or rectify whatever mistakes have been made. Most of those difficulties are the result not just of errors but also the tight blockade and isolation imposed on the socialist countries by imperialism and the major capitalist powers, which have monopolised most of the world's wealth and the most advanced technologies by plundering their colonies, exploiting the working class and promoting a large-scale brain drain from underdeveloped countries.

Devastating wars were unleashed against the first socialist state, taking a toll of millions of lives and destroying most of the means of production. Like a phoenix, the first socialist state had to rise more than once from its ashes. It has performed great services to mankind by defeating fascism and decisively supporting the liberation movements in countries still under colonial rule. Now, all this is being forgotten.

It's disgusting to see how many people, even in the USSR itself, are engaged in denying and destroying the history-making feats and extraordinary merits of that heroic people. That is not the way to rectify and overcome the undeniable errors made by a revolution that emerged from czarist authoritarianism in an enormous, backward, poor country. We shouldn't blame Lenin now for having chosen czarist Russia as the place for the biggest revolution in history.

Thus we didn't hesitate to stop the circulation of certain Soviet publications that are full of poison against the USSR itself and socialism. You can see that imperialism, reactionary forces and the counter-revolution are responsible for that tone. Some of those publications have already started calling for an end to the fair and equitable trade relations that were established between the USSR and Cuba during the Cuban revolutionary process. They want the USSR to begin practising unequal trade with Cuba by selling its products to us at ever higher prices and buying our agricultural products and raw materials at ever lower prices, just as the United States does with other Third World countries — in short, they want the USSR to join the U.S. blockade against Cuba.

Imperialism's undermining actions and the systematic destruction of the values of socialism, combined with the mistakes that have been made, have accelerated the destabilising process in the Eastern European socialist countries. The United States designed and implemented a long-term policy of treating each country differently and undermining socialism from within.

Imperialism and capitalist powers cannot hide their glee over the way things are turning out. They are convinced — not without reason — that, at this point, the socialist bloc has virtually ceased to exist. Groups of U.S. citizens, including U.S. presidential advisers, are programming capitalist development in some of those Eastern European countries right now. A recent news dispatch reported that they were fascinated by that "exciting experience." One of them, a U.S. government official, favoured the application in Poland of a programme similar to the New Deal, with which Roosevelt tried to alleviate capitalism's severe crisis. This would be to help the 600,000 Polish workers who will lose their jobs in 1990 and half of the country's 17.8 million workers, who will have to be retrained and change jobs as a result of the implementation of a market economy.

Imperialism and the NATO capitalist powers are persuaded — not without reason — that, at this point, the Warsaw Pact exists in name only and that societies that are corroded and undermined from within will not be able to resist.

But, can Socialism be improved by forsaking Marxism-Leninism's most basic principles?

It has been stated that socialism must be improved. No one can deny this principle, which is inherent and permanently applicable to every human endeavour. But, can socialism be improved by forsaking Marxism-Leninism's most basic principles? Why must the so-called reforms be along capitalist lines? If those ideas are truly revolutionary, as some claim, why do they receive the imperialist leaders' unanimous, enthusiastic support?

In an amazing statement, the president of the United States described himself as the number-one advocate of the doctrines currently being applied in many countries in the socialist camp.

History has never recorded an instance of a truly revolutionary idea's receiving the enthusiastic support of the leader of the most powerful, aggressive and greedy empire known to mankind.

During Comrade Gorbachev's visit to Cuba in April this year — a visit during which we had a frank, in-depth exchange of views — I publicly expressed my opinion to the National Assembly that, if any socialist country wants to build capitalism, its right to do so should be respected, just as we demand complete respect for any capitalist country's right to build socialism.

I believe that revolution cannot be imported or exported; a socialist state cannot be founded through artificial insemination or by means of an embryo transplant. A revolution requires certain conditions within society, and the people in each individual nation are the only ones who can create it. These ideas don't run counter to the solidarity that all revolutionaries can and should extend to one another. Moreover, a revolution is a process that may advance or regress, a process that may even be frustrated. But above all, Communists must be courageous and revolutionary. Communists are duty-bound to struggle under all circumstances, no matter how adverse they may be. The Paris Communards struggled and died in the defence of their ideas. The banners of the revolution and of socialism are not surrendered without a fight. Only cowards and the demoralised surrender — never Communists and other revolutionaries.

Now, imperialism is urging the European socialist countries to become recipients of its surplus capital, to develop capitalism and to join in plundering the Third World countries.

It is a well-known fact that a large part of the developed capitalist world's wealth comes from the unequal terms of trade it maintains with the Third World countries. For centuries, those nations were plundered as colonies. Millions of their sons and daughters were enslaved; their gold, silver and other mineral resources were exhausted; they were pitilessly exploited; and underdevelopment was imposed on them. Underdevelopment was the most direct and clearest consequence of colonialism. Now, those nations are being squeezed dry by means of interest payments on an endless, unpayable debt, while ridiculously low prices are paid for their commodities and they are forced to pay ever higher prices for the industrial goods they import. Financial and human resources are constantly being drawn away from those nations through the flight of capital and the brain drain. Their trade is blocked by dumping, high tariffs, import quotas, synthetic substitutes produced through advanced technological processes and subsidies for the developed capitalist countries' products when they aren't competitive.

Now, imperialism is inviting the European socialist countries to join it in this colossal plunder — an invitation which seems not to displease the theoreticians of capitalist reforms. Thus, in many of those countries, no one speaks about the tragedy of the Third World, and their discontented multitudes are guided toward capitalism and anticommunism — and, in one country, toward Pan-Germanism. Such developments may even lead to fascist trends. The prize promised by imperialism is a share of the plunder wrested from our peoples, the only way of building capitalist consumer societies.

Right now, the United States and the other capitalist powers are much more interested in investing in Eastern Europe than in any other part of the world. What resources can the Third World — in which billions of people live in subhuman conditions — expect from such developments?

They speak to us of peace, but what kind of peace?

They speak to us of peace, but what kind of peace? Of peace between the major powers, while imperialism reserves the right to overtly intervene in and attack the Third World countries. There are many examples of this.

The imperialist government of the United States demands that no one help the Salvadoran revolutionaries and tries to blackmail the USSR into ending its economic and military assistance to Nicaragua and Cuba because we express solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries, even though we abide strictly by our commitments concerning the weapons supplied by the USSR, in accord with the agreements signed between our sovereign nations. Meanwhile, that same imperialist government which is demanding an end to solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries is helping the genocidal Salvadoran government and sending special combat units to El Salvador; supporting the counter-revolution in Nicaragua; organising coups d'état in Panama; sending military aid to UNITA in Angola — in spite of the successful peace agreements in south western Africa — and continuing to supply the rebel forces in Afghanistan with large amounts of weapons, ignoring the Geneva Accords and the fact that the Soviet troops have withdrawn.

Only a few days ago U.S. Air Force planes insolently intervened in the internal conflict in the Philippines. Regardless of whether or not the rebel forces had good cause for their action — which it is not our place to judge — the U.S. intervention in that country is a very serious matter and is an accurate reflection of the current world situation, showing that the United States has taken upon itself the role of gendarme, not only in Latin America

— a region it has always considered its private preserve — but also in any other Third World country.

The consecration of the principle of universal intervention by a major power spells an end to independence and sovereignty in the world. What kind of peace and security can our peoples have other than that which we ourselves achieve through our own heroism?

The elimination of nuclear weapons is an excellent idea. If it were more than simply utopian and could be achieved someday, it would be of unquestionable benefit and would increase world security — but only for a part of mankind. It would not bring peace, security or hope to the Third World countries.

Imperialism doesn't need nuclear weapons to attack our peoples. Its powerful fleets, which are stationed all over the world; its military bases everywhere; and its ever more sophisticated and lethal conventional weapons are enough to ensure its role as the world's master and gandarme.

Moreover, 40,000 children who could be saved die every day in our world because of underdevelopment and poverty. As I've said before — and this is worth repeating — it's as if a bomb similar to the ones dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were dropped every three days on the poor children in the world.

If these developments continue on their present course and the United States isn't forced to renounce these concepts, what new way of thinking can we speak of? Following this course, the bipolar world which emerged in the postwar period will inexorably become a unipolar world under U.S. hegemony.

In Cuba, we are engaged in a process of rectification. No revolution or truly socialist rectification is possible without a strong, disciplined, respected Party. Such a process cannot be advanced by slandering socialism, destroying its values, casting slurs on the Party, demoralising its vanguard, abandoning the Party's guiding role, eliminating social discipline and sowing chaos and anarchy everywhere. This may foster a counter-revolution, but not revolutionary changes.

The U.S. imperialists think that Cuba won't be able to hold out and that the new situation in the socialist community will inexorably help them bring our Revolution to its knees.

Cuba is not a country in which socialism came in the wake of the victorious divisions of the Red Army. In Cuba, our people created our socialist society in the course of a legitimate, heroic struggle. The 30 years in which we have stood firm against the most powerful empire on earth, that sought to destroy our Revolution, bear witness to our political and moral strength.

Those of us in our country's leadership aren't a bunch of bumbling parvenus, new to our positions of responsibility. We come from the ranks of the old anti-imperialist fighters who followed Mella and Guiteras; who attacked the Moncada and came on the Granma; who fought in the Sierra Maestra, in the underground struggle and at the Bay of Pigs; who were unshaken by the October Missile Crisis; who have stood firm against imperialist aggression for 30 years; who have performed great labour feats and have carried out glorious internationalist missions. Men and women from three generations of Cubans are members and hold posts of responsibility in our battle-seasoned Party, our marvellous vanguard young people's organisation, our powerful mass organisations, our Revolutionary Armed Forces and our Ministry of the Interior.

In Cuba, the Revolution, socialism and independence are indissolubly linked.

We owe everything we are today to the Revolution and socialism. If Cuba were ever to return to capitalism, our independence and sovereignty would be lost forever; we would be an extension of Miami, a mere appendage of U.S. imperialism; and the prediction that a U.S. president made in the 19th century when that country was considering the annexation of Cuba — that our island would fall into its hands like a ripe fruit — would be proved true. Our people are and will always be willing to give their lives to prevent this. Here, at Maceo's tomb, we recall his immortal phrase: "Anyone who tries to seize Cuba will win only its blood-soaked soil, if he doesn't perish in the struggle first."

We Cuban Communists and the millions of our people's revolutionary soldiers will carry out the role assigned to us in history, not only as the first socialist state in the western hemisphere but also as staunch front-line defenders of the noble cause of all the destitute, exploited people in the world.

We have never aspired to having custody of the banners and principles which the revolutionary movement has defended throughout its heroic and inspiring history. However, if fate were to decree that one day we would be among the last defenders of socialism in a world in which U.S. imperialism has realised Hitler's dreams of world domination, we would defend this bulwark to the last drop of our blood.

They died fighting for the dignity and freedom of all men and women

These men and women whom we are laying to rest today in the land of their birth gave their lives for the most treasured values of our history and our Revolution.

They died fighting against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

They died fighting against racism and apartheid.

They died fighting against the plunder and exploitation to which the Third World peoples are subjected.

They died fighting for the independence and sovereignty of those peoples.

They died fighting for the right of all peoples in the world to well-being and development.

They died fighting so there would be no hunger or begging; so that all sick people would have doctors, all children would have schools; and all human beings would have jobs, shelter and food.

They died so there would be no oppressors or oppressed, no exploitation or exploited.

They died fighting for the dignity and freedom of all men and women.

They died fighting for true peace and security for all nations.

They died defending the ideals of Céspedes and Máximo Gómez.

They died defending the ideals of Marti and Maceo.

They died defending the ideals of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

They died defending the ideals of the October Revolution and the example it set throughout the world.

They died for socialism.

They died for internationalism.

They died for the proud, revolutionary homeland that is today's Cuba.

We can follow their example.

Eternal glory to them.

Socialism or death!

Patria o muerte!

Venceremos!

ON THE ORIGINS OF PERESTROIKA

Address to the Soviet Parliament by Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze

I should like to give my opinion on the origin and evolution of perestroika. It is historically inevitable, yet its implementation requires specific conditions, mainly the will of the Soviet community as a whole and its consent to the purport and scope of the possible reforms.

The two Thaws (previous government reform programmes) never developed into overall renewal because the community failed to give such consent. Two other essential things were lacking. First, a generation not guilty of the notorious deformations and alien to them had not yet come to the helm in the state and the Party. Second, there was no certainty that the Soviet Union was safe from without.

I cannot agree with an opinion voiced at a major Party forum, that a different choice could have been made in the March 1985 election of (Gorbachev as) the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. In fact, there was no alternative. The whole Party chose Mikhail Gorbachev. He appeared in its ruling bodies in response to the demands of that time as the leader of the Soviet generation which was to assume the task of reforming our country.

The foreign-political situation of the Soviet Union was the other decisive factor. Different realities persisted in the 1950s and 60s. There were other concepts of threat from without. There was no firm awareness of our nation's safety. The war danger was felt as imminent, even inevitable. This could not but curb the possible reforms. We had to become assured, to get rid of our sense of vulnerability if we were to appraise the current situation objectively, without any bias.

Even more important was the degree in which the Party and the whole nation were involved in the updating drive. Here lies the main difference. The 19th Party conference (in June 1988) and the activities of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet clearly showed the cardinal difference between our yesterday and today. This is the basis of our present optimism and belief in the success of the great cause which our Communist Party and entire nation have undertaken.

Moscow, as printed in *Pravda* October 24, 1989

The Role of The Chiefs in the Struggle for Liberation

by Thando Zuma

Amongst the many forces thrown up by the mass struggles of the second half of the eighties and drawn into the anti-apartheid forces were traditional chiefs. It might be difficult at first sight to accept that in the 1980s there can be chiefs in South Africa who find common cause with the rest of the broad anti-apartheid forces. The institution of chieftainship has been severely weakened by the political plans of Colonialism of a Special Type (CST). Chiefs were deliberately undermined by successive white governments of South Africa during Union and after.

"CHIEFS", THE TRADITIONAL SAYING GOES, "are chiefs because of the people", the suggestion being that they should be bound together with the people and acceptable to them. The advent of colonialism in South Africa put chiefs in a dilemma. The chiefs led their peoples against colonialism. They fought hard battles during those wars of resistance. But the colonial occupation of the country and the gradual introduction of schemes to use chiefs and undermine their authority led to the weakening of the institution. This became more pronounced from the period of the introduction of the Bantu Authorities system by the Nationalist Party governments in the post-1948 period.

Govan Mbeki observed in *South Africa, The Peasants' Revolt* (1964, 1984) that as a general rule "the chiefs have been turned into government appointees and learn soon enough that the way to entrench themselves is to keep as close to government policy as possible". The top-down nature of the Bantu Authorities system was carefully designed to make chiefs the local representatives of the CST governments. Chiefs gradually lost their traditional position and role in the communities.

As Mbeki noted, "The chiefs had long had their duties outlined to them, but again these were stressed as the maintenace of law and order, the reporting to the Bantu Commissioner of any unrest, the enforcement of all government laws and orders, and the dispersal of unlawful assemblies". The apartheid state policy on chiefs followed this pattern so that the African chiefs formed an important basis for the bantustan system.

It would be incorrect though to see all African chiefs as collaborators. Resistance by "patriotic" chiefs took place in many parts of the country. Chiefs who did not conform to the new system were deposed and replaced in many instances by people who had no hereditary right to be chiefs but were prepared to implement Bantu Authorities. Recalcitrant chiefs were not only deposed and replaced, but in many cases deported and exiled to other parts of the country.

How Matanzima Rose

These apartheid chiefs who were imposed on the people were to become the most rabid defenders of the bantustan system. Mbeki has graphically illustrated how such chiefs were installed by tracing the example of Kaiser Matanzima. Matanzima was a minor chief in Emigrant Tembuland. According to Mbeki, "Matanzima had administered one district of St Marks. Then he had been handed Calanga, formerly under (Kumkani/ King) Sabata's own control, in a government move further to enhance his status. Next he claimed Lady Frere in the Glen Grey district of the Ciskei, and even though no legal transfer took place, the government implemented Bantu Authority regulations in the area and then placed it under Matanzima, to add once more to his domain".

The process described above is what made Matanzima a "paramount chief". He was deliberately promoted because he was very enthusiastic about Bantu Authorities. This tactic had to be applied because most of the Kings/"paramount chiefs" in Transkei were not well disposed towards Bantu Authorities. The major chiefs in the Transkei were Chief Poto of west Pondoland, King Sabata of Tembuland and Chief Botha Sigcau of east Pondoland. But it seems that the most crucial area to control was Tembuland, hence the concerted effort by the state to promote the ambitious Matanzima at the expense of King Sabata. Once made paramount chief, Matanzima was set to become "the fanatic supporter of Bantu Authorities, and the whole bantustan fantasy" (Mbeki) The similar case of Buthelezi has been well illustrated by Mzala in his book *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (Zed Books 1988). The regime has likewise promoted Lucas Mangope, Patric Mphephu, and Prof Hudson Ntsanwisi who has been made chief of Lulekani in Phalaborwa where he has no hereditary right whatsoever.

Some chiefs did survive as chiefs but tried to find a way round the Bantu Authorities without selling out their people. Some joined Bantu Authorities but later changed. The story of chiefs in South Africa still has to be told in full.

But given the general trend towards the acceptance by chiefs of the CST policies towards them, it is not surprising that Mzala in his book could conclude that "from 1927 onwards, no chief who held political views contrary to those of the government was confirmed in his position as 'chief' by the Governor-General, irrespective of his hereditary right by African tradition" (Mzala, 1988: 422). In 1927, the Union of South Africa government promulgated the *Native Administration Act No. 38.* This Act laid the basis of what was to become the "taming" of African chiefs and the bringing into complete subservience of most of these chiefs under successive African governments.

Under this Act the African chiefs were subordinated to the native commissioner and the minister of Native Affairs. *Chiefs literally became the localised representatives of the commissioner and the CST state: they collected taxes, became the "judges", made sure that the labour needs of the political economy were satisfied, etc.* Those African chiefs who did not comply were deposed and new ones installed. Most chiefs played the role as determined by the CST state throughout the whole period of the Bantu Authorities and the bantustans.

Today the institution of chieftainship has been firmly embedded within the bantustan system. Chiefs compose a greater percentage of the nominated members of bantustan parliaments. Those positions which require no election have been used in some bantustans to frustrate the attempts by patriotic forces to unseat reactionaries in democratic elections. In the Transkei and Venda, Matanzima and Mphephu were kept in position by reactionary chiefs when defeated in elections by the Democratic People's Party and Venda Independence People's Party respectively. In other cases, chiefs were the only ones composing both a cabinet and a parliament, eg, in KwaNdebele up to the late 1980s.

Cotralesa

How does it come about therefore that in 1987, a number of chiefs came together to found the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (COTRALESA)? Where do these chiefs who compose COTRALESA come from? Where have they been all along?

On 20th September 1987 about 38 chiefs came together to form the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa. The announcement of the formation of this congress shocked many people both in the mass democratic formations and amongst the general political observers. The major forces at the founding congress of Cotralesa were the chiefs from KwaNdebele and Moutse who had been involved in the bitter struggles against independence and the incorporation of Moutse into KwaNdebele. One of the chief movers was Prince Klaas Makhosana Mahlangu, who belongs to the numerically powerful Ndzundza royal family in KwaNdebele.

The South African Youth Congress also had a significant influence in the formation of Cotralesa. This SAYCO influence was to prove both an advantage and a liability in the early life of the organisation. Tactically this was incorrect, the chiefs should have been seen to work for their organisation themselves. The institution of chieftainship is too conservative and as such it is important that chiefs organise themselves and not via the youth.

The logo of the organisation was a hand holding firmly to a leopard skin with in the background some sun's rays symbolising the awakening of the chiefs. The motto of Cotralesa was: "The Dawn of Freedom". At the time of the founding, an interim committee of five was elected comprising a chairperson, vice-chairperson, a secretary and two additional members. The interim chairperson was Chief Morgan Mathebe of Moutse and the secretary Prince Makhosana Mahlangu.

Some of the aims of Cotralesa were stated as: (a) to organise and unite all traditional leaders in our country; (b) to make up the demands of our communities jointly with them, to fight against tribalism, ethnicity and all apartheid instigated conflicts among our people; (c) jointly with all our people to win back the land of our forefathers and share it amongst those who work it in order to banish famine and land hunger; (d) to fight against the destruction of family life through the bantustan system and all related unjust laws; (e) to fight for the eradication of the homeland system and the restoration of South African citizenship to all the people; (f) to build, develop and deepen the spirit of free exchange of cultural activities among all our people in pursuance of the building and development of a true South African culture and national talent; (g) to run projects and self-help schemes together with other progressive organisations that advance our communities and enhance the good image of COTRALESA, also to accommodate chiefs who have been forced to leave their homes (Cotralesa Constitution, 1987).

The preamble of the Constitution stated amongst other things that: (a) we members of the oppressed and exploited people have been abused and alienated in the land of our forefathers by apartheid and its violent homeland system; (b) we look to our forefathers amongst them Sekhukhuni, Ramabulana, Cetshawayo, Ngungunyana, Moshoeshoe, Faku, Luthuli, and now to Mandela, to define our duty and the role we are to play in the ongoing national liberation struggle for a free, unitary and non-racial South Africa.

The founding members also went further to state that "in perpetuating the evil system of apartheid especially in the form of the Homelands, the regime has been, and still is, using chiefs to oppress their own people and to suppress their aspirations for the achievement of a fair, just and equitable order". These chiefs went further to observe that because of the above, "*in the eyes of our society traditional leaders are viewed as part of, and collaborators in the apartheid regime*" (Cotralesa Constitution, emphasis added).

The political stand of Cotralesa was clearly anti-apartheid from its formation. The founders spoke militantly of the historical role played by some chiefs against colonialism and who in turn "have been subjected to imprisonment, banishment and all other known forms of atrocities committed by Pretoria against its opponents" (*SASPU National*, Fourth Quarter, 1987: 14).

In a statement after its formation, Cotralesa publicly stated that "*apartheid has separated us from our people, now we are going back to them*" (emphasis added). The statement went further to strongly condemn "those of our traditional leaders who have been manipulated by apartheid to become collaborators and serve in the structures that have been created by the régime to further enhance the oppression and exploitation of our people" (ibid).

There was a swift and excited response to the formation of Cotralesa from the resistance movement. The United Democratic Front issued a statement which said that "it is a great achievement to see chiefs coming back to the people. We call on all chiefs to join Cotralesa and become part of the oppressed people's struggle for liberation" (ibid). Sayco said that "we are proud that traditional leaders are beginning to realise the truth... We have a long history of chiefs who fought on the side of the people. We believe in such chiefs... Let the present chiefs, if they are still chiefs, lead the people in the fight against what actually deprives their people of their land... Let them be accountable to the people and directed by them" (ibid).

The ANC also welcomed the formation of Cotralesa as a significant step in the fight against apartheid. On the 24th February 1988, a Cotralesa delegation met the leadership of the ANC led by Secretary General Alfred Nzo in Lusaka. The ANC also congratulated the chiefs who had come together to form Cotralesa, which was seen as continuing the heroic role of the chiefs who were part of the ANC for a significant period after its formation. The regime had realised the importance of the chiefs and moved in to corrupt them. Cotralesa was urged to spread itself into the whole of South Africa, organising all patriotic chiefs who are longing for a political home.

Organisational Developments

After the initial excitement about the formation of Cotralesa, there followed a period of no growth at all for the organisation. Some of the underlying reasons lay in its approach to organisation. The first problem was lack of organisational skills. Cotralesa tended to rely on youth, most of whom were urban, to organise rural chiefs. It seems that there was reluctance on the part of chiefs to be organised in this way.

The second organisational problem was the conference-oriented approach of the founders. Most of these conferences tended to take place in hotels, the most unlikely places to find a patriotic chief. Thirdly, the immediate hostility which Cotralesa found amongst some chiefs in the bantustan hierarchies was a significant constraint. Fourthly, like many other mass democratic organisations, Cotralesa suffered from severe lack of resources. Fifth, and perhaps the most important reason, chiefs are unlike industrial workers. They are scattered all around the country and organisers have to be prepared to travel long distances to remote areas to organise — in most cases — just one chief. This takes a lot of time. Finally, the fact that this was a historically new project in a situation where chiefs had never been so organised posed its own objective problems.

From 1987 to 1989 Cotralesa struggled to establish itself as an organisation. Meanwhile, the apartheid regime had unleashed repression throughout the country, in February 1988 restricting and banning about 17 organisations and thereby driving many activists underground. Even though Cotralesa was not banned, the general atmosphere was not conducive to organisation, particularly for inexperienced organisations.

There was a general feeling amongst activists, particularly at the senior level of the mass democratic movement, that the Cotralesa project was too important to die. Slowly, Cotralesa was making some breakthroughs in Transkei, Natal and Northern Transvaal. A restructuring of Cotralesa took place during the June 11th conference. The conference was attended by about 150 chiefs. At that conference, Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo, a highly respected chief from the Mpumalanga area, was elected President of the organisation and Chief G.R. Tshikalanga from Venda its national organiser.

Chief Tshikalanga is one of the examples of chiefs who suffered from the apartheid system. He became chief of his people in December 1963, but did not last long as he was deposed in 1966. He is popular with his people and the fight to reinstate him continues.

Transkei and KwaZulu

Significant developments have recently been reported. In the Transkei, it is estimated that about 80% of the chiefs have declared themselves in favour of Cotralesa. In KwaZulu, about fifty chiefs have so far joined the organisation according to Chief Maphumulo (*Weekly Mail*, October 6-12 1989). These particular developments in KwaZulu have incensed Gatsha Buthelezi who has unleashed a vicious campaign against chief Maphumulo and Cotralesa.

Buthelezi has described Cotralesa as an organisation attempting to "thrust the spear into the very heart of Zulu unity" (ibid). Buthelezi is particularly worried about the growth of Cotralesa in Natal because he sees it as challenging his traditional political hegemony amongst the chiefs of that region. In September 1989 Buthelezi summoned all chiefs in KwaZulu to Ulundi to discuss or to tell them not to join Cotralesa.

He made sure that King Zwelithini was with him at that meeting. He said that he had summoned the chiefs so that they could "close ranks and rejoice in our unity and to tell Inkosi Maphumulo to go to hell" (*Weekly Mail*, September 15-21, 1989). It was further reported that King Zwelithini also joined the Buthelezi chorus and condemned Chief Maphumulo who he said had "shed his right to friendship and comradeship" and should thus be isolated by other chiefs (ibid).

Other chiefs who are members of Cotralesa in Natal have also suffered attacks from Buthelezi and the King. The most notable member of Cotralesa in Natal is the Senior Prince of the Zulu royal family, Prince Israel Mcwayizeni. He is a particularly interesting member of Cotralesa because he was regent of the Zulu royal crown when the present King was still at school. He also has a history of disagreement and conflict with Buthelezi. In November 1989, the Senior Prince's house was attacked by vigilantes thought to be members of Inkatha. The attack occurred after Buthelezi had verbally attacked the Senior Prince for his membership of Cotralesa. However, it seems that the Senior Prince is popular with the Zulu people and as such Buthelezi may be constrained in taking any further action against him.

Chief Alpheus Molefe, the chief of the Molefe people in Nqutu district of Natal, has already been suspended from his position because of his membership of Cotralesa. He is currently filing papers to the Supreme Court challenging the legal and constitutional basis of his suspension by Buthelezi. There has been no recent attempt to dismiss Chief Maphumulo because such an attempt was previously made in 1978 but was declared null and void by the supreme court. Chief Alpheus Molefe is also one of the popular chiefs in Natal and claims support from the 30,000 people who reside under his jurisdiction. In northern Natal, there are about four chiefs in control of the Ingwavuma area who are sympathetic to Cotralesa and are seeking legal means to secede from KwaZulu because, as they argue, they are not Zulus but Tongas.

Thus in organisational terms Cotralesa is growing. According to Chief Maphumulo, there are many chiefs who have not yet joined but have indicated their willingness to join. He says that Cotralesa has to be built because "it will be a big force in South African politics" (*Weekly Mail*, October 6-12, 1989). To what extent this will be the case will depend on organisation and political consciousness.

So far, as indicated above, some significant steps have been made. But a lot remains to be done. According to a Cotralesa survey published in November 1988, there are many anti-apartheid, anti-bantustan chiefs who are willing to be part of Cotralesa. But for now it seems that the main areas where organisational gains have been made are Natal, Transkei and KwaNdebele. The organisation has a lot of work to do in the northern, western and eastern Transvaal and the Border region.

Contest for Democratic Power

Has the institution of chieftainship not as yet outlived itself? Are the material conditions which gave rise to this institution still there or are we trapped in cultural romanticisms? Is the liberation movement seriously committed to this institution of chiefs? If the material conditions for its existence have long ceased to exist, has people's consciousness developed to the level of accepting its demise?

Let us present two theses on these questions for consideration.

Thesis 1: chieftainship is outdated and should therefore not find any role in future. Isn't it the case that "if Africans have had chiefs, it was because all human societies have had them at one stage or another? But when a people have developed to a stage which discards chieftainship, when their social development contradicts the need for such an institution, then to force it on them is not liberation but enslavement". (Mbeki: 47). We will need to legislate against it and give democratic power to the people. In any case, the institution of chieftainship is fundamentally anti-democratic, i.e., chiefs are not elected by popular vote but follow a line of succession, which is after all patriarchal, except in a few instances like the Balobedu of the Mojadji royalty in the Northern Transvaal who are ruled by queens.

This thesis could cause a lot of political problems for us. True, the position of chiefs in contemporary South African society could be said to be redundant due to the emergence of other 'chiefs' who are elected and perform similar functions. In a situation of profound people's power, most chiefs could indeed become redundant. But that will not necessarily imply that people's views and perceptions of chiefs will change likewise. In the early 1980s, there was an interesting polemic between comrades Spectator and Nyawuza in the pages of *The African Communist* about tradition and revolutionary society in Mozambique.

In those debates, the question of chiefs also occupied a significant space. Comrade Spectator argued that in Mozambique "chiefs and indunas continued as a whole to play the role of lackeys for the colonialists. They passed on information, collected taxes, recruited for the colonial army..." (Spectator, *AC*, Second Quarter 1983). Comrade Spectator went further to argue that in FRELIMO, "the great Kingdoms of Monomotapa, Zimbabwe and Gaza are not presented as proofs of a glorious past which preceded colonialism, but as examples of feudal exploitation in terms of which a small number of royals surrounded themselves with religious awe and lived in splendour on the basis of tribute exacted from their artisan and farmer subjects" (*AC*, No 89, Second Quarter 1982).

Comrade Spectator's conclusion is based on the FRELIMO approach which — according to him — says, "it was the masses who bore the brunt of foreign domination, it was they who fought back in their daily lives, who in their songs, dances and stories kept the flames of independence alive even in the darkest days. Glory — not to the feudals — but to the people as a whole!" (ibid).

Nyawuza's argument was that one must not confuse one's advanced political consciousness with that of the people who still accept these kingdoms and the institution of chieftainship as a whole. For him, any political programme which is divorced from "the level of consciousness of the people, to say nothing of the practical-political demands of the times, can — in our anti-colonial struggle — lead to disastrous results" (*AC*, Fourth Quarter 1982).

People's Control

Thesis II: the institution should be allowed to exist in future but under "our" control, "our" here suggesting democratic people's power. The specific role of chiefs would depend on the role they play now in the national democratic revolution. It is recognised that historically chiefs have played leadership roles in our societies in line with the given material conditions. Shaka for example was king and commander of his Zulu forces. His position was due in the main to his political and military skills. Societies of those days were organised along these lines and did not know other forms of political organisation.

Whilst Thesis II may sound acceptable to those comrades who now compose Cotralesa, there will be many problems concerning the way in which chiefs will coexist with democratic organisations and other government organs of people's power. In terms of political participation, the people's power perspective will favour democratic election, instead of appointment by hereditary right. A lot of political work will have to be done to raise the consciousness of both the chiefs and the people as a whole on whatever formula of coexistence we find.

One can further argue that people's power will create a whole new set of political and economic conditions which together could create a basis for the gradual phasing out of the system of chieftainship. But this will take a long time. And in any case not everybody will agree that the system must wither away. There may be those who want a new constitution to guarantee a secure position for the chiefs, queens and kings. Political history does show numerous cases where the institutions and traditions of royalty continue to exist (albeit controlled by the constitutions) even in advanced capitalist countries: Britain, Sweden, Belgium, Holland and so on.

The question of the future position and role of chiefs has to be debated in the open so that there is no suspicion of a hidden agenda on the part of the liberation movement. The emergence of Cotralesa is clearly a contribution to the debate. Despite the fact that CST has over the years used chiefs for its purposes, the national liberation movement has adopted the position that those patriotic chiefs who join the people in the liberation struggle are important component parts of the national democratic revolution. In any case, despite the various machinations of CST, there are many popular chiefs in South Africa today who together with their people are taking part in the struggle. Most of the struggles they have engaged in are against the bantustan system itself and for land.

Cotralesa will play an important role in the mobilisation of the rural masses. This becomes even more important now with the deepening crisis of the bantustan system. Together with the other formations of the mass democratic movement, the people in the rural areas can be reached, organised and mobilised into struggle. We should welcome this move by the chiefs to organise themselves. There is still a lot of organisational and political work to be done. At times the process may be contradictory and costly.

The ANC once had a house of chiefs, but it died as a result of the tactics employed by CST. In 1932, Dr Pixley ka Seme was president of the ANC. Making a passionate appeal to the chiefs not to move away from the ANC, he said that "*The chiefs today should realise that their forefathers won these positions of honour and of high esteem by fighting for the salvation of their own* *people and not by lying down and seeking personal comforts and pleasures.*" (quoted in Mzala: 43, emphasis added).

In the January 8th Statement of the NEC of the ANC for 1990, Cotralesa is singled out. The statement says that "A special tribute is due to the traditional leaders who have combined themselves into the Congress of Traditional Leaders. Having broken away from the stable of those who help to administer the apartheid system, these leaders have regained the respect of the people and are a valuable and indispensable component of the genuine forces for change". It is probably correct to repeat that call with the confidence that Cotralesa will reach out to these chiefs and indeed bring them back to the people!

VLADIMIR
1989

AFRICA
NOTES & COMMENT

by Jabulani Mkhatshwa

BENIN: ARE THESE THE WINDS OF EASTERN EUROPE?

A SERIES OF LARGE-SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS in Benin's main towns threatened to paralyse the government of President Mathieu Kerekoou, head of state since 26 October, 1972, following a coup that ousted a rotating presidency that was constituted by the "fathers ofindependence": Humbert Maga, Justin Ahomadegbe and Sourou Migan Apithy.

With the ultimate formation of the Benin People's Revolutionary Party (PRPB), General Kerekou announced the anti-imperialist and socialist-orientated policy of his new government. The official political ideology of the country became Marxism-Leninism, with the emphasis on the establishment of the alliance of peasants and workers as the leading force of the revolution. Since then President Kerekou has survived several attempts to topple his government by conspiracies engineered mainly from those financial centres of the world which sought to make Benin a client neo-colonial state.

The price of pursuing an independent economic policy has been, however, the accumulation of imperialist-generated economic problems, problems which are essentially not peculiar to Benin in the African continent, but which had a particular effect on a government that had chosen to eschew the capitalist road of development.

Benin's economic problems reached their climax towards the end of 1989, when the government failed to pay three months' salaries to certain civil servants (including teachers). This development sparked major demonstrations in Porto Novo, Cotonou and Abomey. Several thousand protesters in Cotonou marched towards Lenin Square (which is still being built) and some youths tore off the cover from Lenin's statue and set the cover alight.

Prominent among the banners that were held high in the demonstration was a call for President Kerekou to be replaced by the leader of the outlawed Communist Party of Dahomey, Pascal Fatondji. As some people marched towards the central police station in the same town, burning tyres and throwing stones, the police opened fire and one young man was killed and six people wounded. After this the crowd dispersed.

Strike Threat

During an unprecedented united action by the teachers and the students, the representatives of the latter threatened to go on strike again if their wage claims were not met. Students and some civil servants reiterated the warning. It was following these threats, which took place during the same time as a delegation from the IMF and the World Bank was winding up a month-long tour of the country, that the government announced over the radio the banning of all demonstrations in the country. The problem, said President Kerekou, was not that the government was unwilling to pay these salaries, but that the country's coffers were empty. Speaking in an interview with Radio France Internationale on December 11, President Kerekou said:

> "Benin is not the first country to go to the IMF and the World Bank. There are many governments in Africa which have not been able to pay the salaries of civil servants for several months".

The social tension led, for the first time since 1974, to the questioning of the official policies that have been guiding the country's economic development thus far. In almost the same sense in which uprisings in eastern Europe have forced a revision of various governments' policies, President Kerekou announced that Marxism-Leninism can no longer serve as the only guide for the development of Benin. Instead, he called for the holding of a national conference which would include delegates from all sections of the population, including opposition organisations and the church, in order to draft a new constitution for the country. In the words of an official document, such a conference, scheduled for the first half of 1990, would "contribute to the building of a new democratic process and to the fostering of a healthy new political atmosphere in the country".

What is in crisis, of course, is not the theoretical system of Marxism-Leninism, but the concrete application of the ideological guidelines under concrete and ever changing conditions. President Kerekou has not changed from his faith that ultimately it is socialism that provides the only basis for resolving society's problems. Meanwhile, Marxists have to study the concrete conditions and ensure that, whether the government they preside over initially came about as a result of a progressive coup or through popular uprising, a process of democratising society and ensuring that the revolution is institutionalised among the masses becomes part of, and an irrevocable policy of, the progressive government in power.

LESOTHO: WHEN SHOOTING IS A PRESIDENTIAL DUTY

GENERAL JUSTIN METSING LEKHANYA, chairman of the military junta which came to power in Lesotho in 1986 as a result of a South African sponsored coup, told a magistrate at an inquest in the High Court recently that in shooting dead a 20-year old student he was only doing his duty as a citizen.

The inquest resulted from an incident about a year ago when General Lekhanya, in the company of his bodyguard, Sergeant Khothaso Mojakhomo, went to the Lesotho Agricultural College to see his girlfriend, Puleng Makara, and found her with her lover, George Ramone. General Lekhanya then fired two shots at the student with an Israeli Uzi machine pistol, killing him on the spot. This led to a national outcry as well as pressures, including from King Moshoeshoe, for the general to resign. It was also due to this pressure that an inquest was finally set up, during which General Lekhanya was cross-examined by Advocate David Soggot for a total of twelve hours in two days.

In his defence, General Lekhanya said he had gone to the Agricultural College to check on a veterinary surgeon but could not find him. He then decided to visit his "sister-in-law" at the college. "As we approached my sister-in-law's house I heard screams of a woman in grave danger. I thought my duty as a citizen was to go and investigate what was going on", he told the court. Then, he added, he noticed a man on top of a woman, struggling with her. The man had tried to run away, whereupon he had fired shots and killed him. Thus died a student who was due to finish his studies in about six month's time.

David Soggot put it to him that the woman in question was Puleng Makara, known by most students in the college as the general's girl friend, and that she was not his sister-in-law. Avoiding any reference to Puleng, General Lekhanya insisted that the woman he had visited was his sister-in-law. What was the name of his sister-in-law? asked Soggot. The general refused to disclose her name, arguing that such disclosure would be an embarrassment.

The magistrate took the side of the general and defended his right not to disclose the name of the sister-in-law.

Soggot drew the attention of the magistrate to the discrepancies found in the earlier affidavits made by General Lekhanya's bodyguard as well as the Commissioner of Police, Major General Lebitso Dingiswayo, and suggested that a cover-up was taking place as "one after the other senior officers have obstructed the course of justice or committed perjury". Furthermore, the murder of George Ramone was reported by General Lekhanya to the police not on the same night of the shooting but the following day. "I took it upon myself the next morning to report the matter to the police and I do not see how I could have hatched a cover up", said Lekhanya.

Although the Attorney-General, Kelebone Maope, insisted on an affidavit from General Lekhanya as part of the formalities for a judicial inquiry, it took the general more than seven months after the shooting incident to provide one. Asked by Soggot if he had informed anybody other than the police about the killing of George Ramone, the general said that he had informed the Military Council. However, when giving evidence before the inquest, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colonel Thaabee Letsie, contradicted the general and said that he had never reported the killing of the student to the Military Council. "I find no reason why the government is being dragged into this thing," said the Foreign Minister, "since it is purely a personal matter".

According to the evidence given by Dr Nkuke Musoke, who carried out the post-mortem on Ramone's body, the deceased was shot at very close range at the base of the skull, through his mouth, indicating that he might have been shot while lying down, probably sleeping, as opposed to the general's claim that Ramone was trying to run away.

Among the people of Lesotho this incident has aroused fears that in the absence of democracy the rulers may remain above the law.

SWAZILAND: A NEW PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION IS FORMED

THE SWAZI PUBLIC AND POLICE were surprised to wake up one day last year to find the slogan "PUDEMO" painted in various towns of the country — Mbabane, Manzini, Siteki, Nhlangano, Big Bend and even as far south as Hlathikhulu. Accompanying leaflets explained that PUDEMO stood for "People's United Democratic Movement" or Insika Yenkhululeko Yemaswati, in SiSwati.

The first suspect of the police became Dr Ambrose Zwane, former leader of the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC), who led the opposition to the late King Sobhuza in the period after independence in 1986. The NNLC was banned in Swaziland following the state of emergency proclaimed by the late king in April 1973. The targeting of Dr Zwane demonstrated the unacquaintance of the Swazi police with any serious political opposition to the government, since Dr Zwane (as he himself pleaded) is not part of this new organisation. It should be recalled that following his exile, Dr Zwane signed an undertaking with King Sobhuza that if he were allowed back into the country, he would not involve himself in public political activities. He insists that he has not broken that pledge to King Sobhuza, instead he alleges that it is the Swazi government, by breaking into his surgery and arresting him for PUDEMO, that has broken the agreement.

Dr Zwane was subsequently released by the police as it became apparent to the authorities that the ideological orientation of PUDEMO is far from that of the NNLC. Whereas the NNLC stood for a strictly pan-Africanist perspective for Swaziland's future, PUDEMO is a broad nationalist organisation that draws inspiration from the Mass Democratic Movement in South Africa.

The organisation has already held its first founding conference within Swaziland, where delegates were composed of workers, peasants, students and a few small business persons. As the Manifesto adopted at that conference proclaims: "Our movement with its democratic structure represents the true sentiments of our people".

What are those sentiments? PUDEMO says that Swaziland has been ruled under a state of emergency since 1973. Whether the royal rulers have forgotten about repealing it or not, its effect on the population is not forgotten. The emergency has given the authorities a free hand to violate some of the most elementary human rights. No one in Swaziland, for example, is allowed to utter any disagreement with the government, not to mention organising opposition to it. In terms of the Sedition Act, which contains clauses covering the widest imaginable set of political activities, anyone who organises politically without obtaining the permission of the Commissioner of Police is liable to twenty years' imprisonment.

Those alleged to have violated these provisions have either been deported from the country (whether or not they are Swazi citizens) or simply locked up under the 60-day detention law under the emergency. Nobody has as yet been sentenced to 20 years for sedition, but then neither has anyone done anything in violation of its provisions.

Undemocratic System

Although it is generally assumed in the world that Swaziland is a peaceful monarchy exercising a constitutionally democratic form of government through the Tinkhundla system (introduced by the late King Sobhuza in 1978), in fact this is an undemocratic system. Candidates to parliament are not nominated by the people but by the ruling Imbokodvo Party in consultation with the royal family. That is why every Prime Minister in Swaziland has to belong to the Dlamini ruling clan.

Members of parliament and ministers also have to depend on the favouritism and nepotism of those at the top before they can be granted various favours such as business licences. As a result of this situation, public corruption is rife as individual members of the royal family squander public funds and set up private enterprises which the taxpayers' money is supposed to support.

Given these conditions, PUDEMO demands:

1. That the state of emergency be lifted.

2. A return to constitutional parliamentary democracy attained at independence whereby the monarchy will itself be constitutional as in all such modern societies;
3. A clearly defined Bill of Rights to ensure the dignity of the Swazi people and to protect them from abuse. Among these must be the right of expression, freedom of affiliation and organisation, and the right to strike and to hold public meetings;
4. An end to detention without trial;
5. An immediate abrogation of the Tinkhundla system;
6. An end to public corruption and the misuse of public funds through private enterprises like Tibiyo and Tisuka;
7. An immediate enactment of the Citizenship Act without ambiguities; and
8. That all citizens who have been forced into exile be allowed to return without any preconditions.

The future of PUDEMO is as important as the future of Swaziland itself. Its demands sound a matured note which most Swazis will understand and probably respond to. Too often, the rulers of Swaziland have hidden under the shadow of apartheid South Africa without their own political deeds coming to light for the world to judge. Yet Swaziland politics, as will always be the case, is the business of the Swazi people themselves.

> A love of liberty is planted by nature in the hearts of all men.
>
> — *Dionysius of Halicarnassus,*
> Antiquities of Rome, *about 20 B.C.*

COSATU – An Army of One Million Workers in the Fight for Freedom

Interview with General Secretary Jay Naidoo

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST: Can you tell us something about your life and history?

JAY NAIDOO: I was born in Greenwood Park in Durban in 1954, the youngest of seven children. My father was a court interpreter with whom I never got to debate politics, but my mother was very important in formulating my views on relating to people irrespective of race. I grew up in an environment where there was a lot of emphasis on treating people as equals. My elder brothers and sisters brought their university friends into the house, including many Africans, so I grew up conscious of the fact that black people were discriminated against and there was a need for black people to unite in the fight against oppression and racism.

When I was about five years old we had to move under the Group Areas Act to Reservoir Hills, where I went to school.

When I was about 12 I remember going to a meeting at which Steve Biko spoke. An elder brother was an office bearer in the local branch of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO). I was impressed with the strength of people like Biko, who would openly confront the security police. During the 1972 strike we boycotted schools and some of us cut down the South African flag and burnt it or plastered the school inspector's car with anti-republic stickers.

I did well at school and matriculated in 1972. I decided not to go to university and for two years did odd jobs and travelled about, learning to meet and interact with people.

AC: Why didn't you want to go to university?

JN: I was terribly frustrated after school. I didn't want to go in for academic studies. I wanted to see the world. I worked for some months in a shop in Colenso and then went to Pretoria. During this period I made contact with people in the Black Consciousness Movement. They organised... and you talked to them. In 1975 I enrolled at Westville University but contracted TB. I was going to be a doctor, but after completing my BSc I left. There was no real movement in student politics, which had a non-collaborationist approach to everything and I felt very frustrated after the upsurge of 1976.

I left the university for a while and did some reading — anything political I could lay my hands on. I went to Pretoria to listen to the outcome of the SASO trial, and on my return went back to university and helped organise a SASO branch at the university. It was an off-campus branch because of the boycott position, but it gave us a vehicle through which to organise people. We had grandiose ideas about organising people in squatter camps, building community centres etc. But by 1977 I began to realise that student politics weren't the answer in the South African revolution. Students dropped everything when it came to exams or holidays.

AC: SASO was active at the time, but was there any reason why you weren't attracted to the Congress?

JN: The Natal Indian Congress wasn't functioning at that time. But by 1977 we began to question the basis on which we had organised the Black Consciousness Movement, we began to question the emphasis on racism. We felt that the Black Consciousness Movement had made its contribution. We were confident about ourselves but we felt we had to develop beyond the analysis of the South African situation in terms of race.

AC: You say the BCM had given you confidence. How had it done that?

JN: It provided a forum in which we could articulate our struggle and it made us proud to be black. It addressed the psychological aspect of our oppression. In discussion with whites it gave us an arrogance almost. We felt we were better than these guys who were using racism to oppress us.

Contact with Working Class

AC: Did you have any contact with the working class up to that point?

JN: Well, amongst those we came into contact with at that time were Mohammed Valli and a couple of others who had come into the trade unions. In 1978 I started to teach on a voluntary basis, and I became involved in the community, teaching nurses and others who were studying for their matriculation. I and others in SASO started to read socialist material: Lenin *What Is To Be Done*, Stalin on dialectical materialism, Mao Tse Tung *On Practice* etc. We became more aware of the class divisions in society and were developing a class analysis. There was quite a lot of conflict with the BCM at this time. Orthodox BCM people used to call us reds. Eventually we decided to break completely with Black Consciousness.

We got involved in mass work in the Indian and Coloured communities in Durban, but I began to feel certain limitations in this and I also began to feel that the affairs of the community were being directed in an undemocratic way, so in 1979 I started to teach in Benoni. I only stayed there for nine months. I developed a really good relationship with the students, but at the end of that period the principal said there is only room for one boss in this school, so I left and went back to Durban.

At that time the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) was looking for volunteers in the trade union movement. So I offered my services and took on the task of reorganising the Sweet Workers' Union which was in danger of deregistration. We worked very hard. I used to get up at 4 in the morning and stay on the job until 10 at night organising the Indian workers, mainly by speaking to them in their homes. The African workers were organised separately. I think that was a big mistake we made.

AC: Did African workers do different sorts of work from Indian workers?

JN: Not essentially. There were some departments staffed by African workers and others by Indian workers, but most of the supervisory roles were occupied by Indians. I decided that to understand the nature of exploitation I needed to work in a factory, so I got a job in a textile factory. It was an extremely segregated factory — Indian department, African department, Indian change rooms etc.

That was an important experience in my life. The factory was unorganised, so we decided to organise it. We had 12-hour shifts. I remember that by 12 that night I was just falling asleep, sleep walking. It was hard work but we got the factory organised into the Garment and Textile Union and it is still quite powerfully organised.

Later I was asked to go to Maritzburg as a FOSATU organiser to help organise the leather industry, with about 20 to 30 factories employing about 10,000 workers. We were again successful in organising the African workers and quite a large section of the Indian workers into the Tanning, Footwear and Allied Workers' Union. Then began a heavy campaign of victimisation, and in those days there was no answer to unfair dismissals.

In those formative years of the union movement everyone worked together. We got to the factories at 4 in the morning and we used to light fires to keep ourselves warm. We handed out pamphlets and there were times when the workers did not even want to look at us, let alone take our pamphlets, because the foreman would be watching to see who was receiving the pamphlets.

Role of Inkatha

It was at this time that Inkatha was starting to make inroads into the trade union movement. One December, I think it was the end of 1980, we went on leave and when we came back we found Norman Middleton in the office.

AC: What was his position in the unions?

JN: He had no position in the unions and we were surprised to find him when we came back. The person who had arranged for his employment was Willie Menter, who used to work for an interim branch of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union. It wasn't a fully established branch, so he had got the interim committee to employ Norman and they then went on a massive campaign to get rid of us.

It was a very difficult period. In fact, basically the future of the trade union movement was at stake. The position was that most senior leaders of FOSATU were all involved in Inkatha..... there wasn't any other trade union solidly organised on the factory floor at that time. Our most senior leadership were quite senior figures in Inkatha.

What happened then was that the NEC decided to dismiss the branch secretary who had employed Norman Middleton and refused to recognise the employment of Middleton. Then we had a war on our hands.

It is important to remember that FOSATU had taught us respect for union independence, respect for union struggles on the factory floor. A regional congress of the union condemned Menter and Middleton for interference in the union structures and providing information to Inkatha, and endorsed their dismissal. And these were senior Inkatha people who were involved in endorsing the dismissal of Menter and Middleton.

As part of the settlement of the whole issue we had to have a joint meeting of Inkatha and FOSATU at Empangeni, at which Buthelezi and Chris Dlamini (later COSATU Vice-President) were to speak. The atmosphere was very tense, with thousands of people bussed in by both sides. There was a stand-off, and Inkatha accepted the dismissal of those guys.

AC: What did Buthelezi want?

JN: Buthelezi wanted them reinstated. Buthelezi was using the Menters and Middletons as an entry point into FOSATU. I then had to go into the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union because Middleton and Menter took away certain factories and began to organise a separate union. So I spent the next year consolidating the union in Maritzburg and Durban and it became part of the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) and eventually part of the (black consciousness) National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU).

AC: By this time you were fully committed to the trade union movement?

JN: Yes. I had made up my mind that this was the area I wanted to work in. I had realised the importance of the working class in fighting exploitation and the vital role of the unions in combating racism on the factory floor. I felt I could make a bigger contribution towards building the progressive movement in the Indian community through the trade unions than anywhere else.

So then I got elected general secretary of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union, in 1983/84, and became active in FOSATU. And in FOSATU I learned once again that a lone individual can make no impact, one must have a base. I remember at the 1982 congress of FOSATU I stood up and challenged Joe Foster's speech and argued for stronger links with the community organisations, but I stood alone and eventually had to apologise to the congress.

Trade Union Democracy

The 1984 stay-away in the Transvaal was a watershed in the trade union movement, because it highlighted the need for FOSATU to have stronger links with organisations in the community, for unity in action between workers, students and community activists. Flowing out of all this was a much stronger commitment to unity of organised workers in the country.

I always believed that the trade unions should be the shop floor rather than an amorphous community-based structure which some of the general unions have. I thought that FOSATU made a very important contribution to the development of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) through its emphasis on the principles of worker control, accountability, proper structures, servicing the needs of the workers etc. I became involved in the unity talks and it was in the context of the new alliances being built that I agreed to stand as general secretary.

(COSATU was founded in Durban on November 30, 1985, following four years of discussion between different union groupings, with Elijah Barayi as President, Chris Dlamini as Vice-President and Jay Naïdoo as general secretary. The new federation comprised 33 affiliates with 450,000 paid-up members. — Ed.)

AC: Where did the major initiatives for unity come from?

JN: Mainly from FOSATU on one side and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) which at that stage was part of CUSA.
AC: Was there any input from the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)?
JN: The general unions SAAWU and GAWU at some stage decided to re-enter the unity talks and I understood that the initiative had been discussed with SACTU. The contribution SACTU would have made would have been to get unions like these to become part of COSATU.
AC: So you personally did not have any contact with SACTU at that stage?
JN: No.
AC: Can you give us some idea of what COSATU embraced at that stage?
JN: In the initial stages COSATU was an amalgam of unions with different policies and different practices and the struggle that faced us was to unite them into a cohesive organisation. On paper we represented 450,000 paid-up members, but 300,000 would be a truer figure. The initial meetings of COSATU were full of conflict over the interpretation of COSATU policy and forms of organisation, but by the 1987 congress there was acceptance by everyone that representation would be on the basis of industrial sectors or unions.

Some of our most militant battles were fought in 1987. We reached a height of militancy in our living wage campaign, and massive strikes by railway workers, metal workers and mine workers brought COSATU directly into conflict with the apartheid state and apartheid repression. What with the killing of railway workers and the bombing of COSATU headquarters we realised that our only defence was to unite and develop a common response.
AC: You mean to unite with the political movement?
JN: To unite first of all within COSATU and secondly to try to build a more structured alliance with the United Democratic Front (UDF). At that time the UDF had been under brutal repression. Its structures were very weak on the ground so that a lot of the organisational responsibility fell on our shoulders.
AC: The ruling class appeal to workers is usually to keep out of politics. In South Africa, is there any meaningful way in which trade union activity can be undertaken without getting involved in politics?
JN: In COSATU there was not a body of opinion that there must be no politics in the trade unions.
AC: What about Inkatha?
JN: Inkatha launched the United Workers' Union of South Africa (UWUSA) at that stage as a counter to COSATU, arguing that we were

misleading the workers into politics. The irony of that was that Inkatha as a political movement was launching UWUSA as its political child. In fact the launch of UWUSA was to show the strength of the trade union movement and to lead to a decisive break with Inkatha by organised workers in Natal. The workers had to make a choice, and they made a choice on the basis of the organisation they understood most and were most in contact with, and that was the trade union movement.

At the same time conflicts were developing within Inkatha itself as represented in the KwaZulu government. Factories where we organised in areas under KwaZulu control were refusing to recognise our unions, dismissing our members, victimising them. The bosses argued that they had come to these areas because they had been promised the unions would not be a problem. That reinforced the views of our membership about the need to consolidate the unions independently of Inkatha. As the conflict between us and Inkatha increased and particularly after the launch of UWUSA, workers in COSATU unions made quite a decisive break-away from Inkatha.

AC: What did UWUSA amount to?

JN: Well UWUSA existed in many factories and no matter how small the number of active members they had, they constituted a problem because the employers in many instances sided with them.

AC: And UWUSA worked side by side with your unions?

JN: They worked side by side with our members. We handled the issue by opening it up. In a number of factories our shop stewards said: "Let's debate the issue. What has COSATU done and what does COSATU represent? What has Inkatha done and what does UWUSA represent?" If we had merely resorted to cliché and ridiculed the Inkatha challenge we might have lost a lot of support ourselves. The foundation stone of our strength is the consciousness of our members, how conscious our shop stewards are as leaders on the factory floor.

AC: And where is UWUSA today?

JN: Today it is largely discredited because a lot of its activity has been through coercion. And where they have succeeded in organising workers in a factory, they haven't done anything for them. They criticise our tendency to strike, but they offer no alternative. According to information I have, they have secured about 10 recognition agreements in factories in the whole of Natal, whereas about 60 per cent of the factories in Natal are organised by COSATU.

AC: What is COSATU's present membership?

JN: Over one million paid-up members.

AC: You said earlier that the question of accountability and democratisation in the trade union movement was one of the great achievements of COSATU. How have you managed to sustain this level of democratic participation of the workers on the shop floor and in COSATU as a whole?

JN: Well, it is not only the achievement of COSATU but of other unions as well, like the NUM, which have made an important contribution. Basically, democracy is sustained because it has become entrenched in the consciousness of the workers. The whole question of mandates and accountability permeates every aspect of our activity. For example if an official went to meet the management without the shop-stewards he would be in trouble. So would the shop-stewards who went to see the management without consulting the workers. The right of workers to control their organisation is very much part of their daily experience

If a worker has a problem on the floor, he reports to the shop-stewards' committee; if they don't act on it, they get reported to the branch executive committee and eventually to the national committee. Once a year the workers know they must get an audited statement and there must be a congress to which they send delegates and at which policies are made and leaders elected. The relationship between structures offers the workers an avenue to address their problems.

AC: One supposes that not all COSATU unions are at the same level of development; some are better than others?

JN: Yes. But more or less all unions have their congresses, their regular structures' meetings. Take the Metal Workers' Union in the Transvaal, for example. Every week there are meetings of 2-300 shop stewards who discuss what their union should be doing. Sometimes their decisions are in direct contradiction of what the official union decides. But there is always that pressure from the grassroots on the official union structures. The same thing happens in COSATU. These pressures develop a healthy tension which ensures that the union is dominated by class conscious workers rather than a handful of bureaucrats.

This is one of the major problems confronting South African politics at this stage — how to move from structures of activists to structures of political leadership. This is one of the debates we have tried to inject into COSATU to develop a cadre policy that builds an all-round activist.

AC: There are many calls for socialism to be heard in the trade union movement today. Where does this drive come from and what does it signify?

JN: COSATU has never denied its socialist orientation and we have always argued that capitalism and apartheid are inseparable. Our whole experience as part of the working class has been of a very brutal exploitation and oppression, so naturally the orientation of the working class will be towards socialism. Another factor is that the state has mounted such a propaganda war against communism and socialism that naturally the workers are attracted to the idea.

The very process of organising the workers into unions enables us to identify the conflict between classes. The bosses squeeze us in order to make super-profits and we learn to unite because it is only through workers' unity that we are able to defend ourselves. In all our major battles with capital we have seen the intervention of the apartheid state on the side of big business, whether it is a miners' strike or a major industrial dispute. So imprinted in the experience of the workers is an understanding of the relationship between capital and apartheid and from this flows the workers' demand for a fundamental restructuring of South African society.

AC: What is the relationship between COSATU and the political movement?

JN: It's understood that COSATU is not a political party. We are a trade union federation which has a number of political responsibilities. Our strikes turn into major schools for training activists in the tactics of struggling for a better future. Our education programme focuses on the need to restructure society in both economic and political terms.

In order to advance the interests of the working class, COSATU has always felt the need to link itself with a political party whose programme was the closest to ours, and that brought an understanding of the role of the ANC and its alliance with the SACP. We have come to realise that ultimately the fundamental change of South African society will come primarily through the actions of the masses of the people, and the working class itself is not located only in the trade unions. So in the last few years we have spent a lot of time and energy trying to consolidate the national sector of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the civics, the youth, the women and the unemployed, though we have not had much success with the unemployed so far. We have been building an alliance of mass democratic and accountable national organisations that could develop a political programme what would be linked with the programme of the broader liberation movement and become an effective vehicle for change.

AC: It is clear that a lot of trade union activists understand the link between economic and political struggle and the need for change and socialism, but how far does this understanding go amongst the rank and file at grassroots level?
JN: I think this consciousness exists among the senior leadership and the shop-steward leadership in our unions, but if there is a weakness it is that we haven't yet found the formula to educate our membership at the mass level and this is one of the key issues that faces us in the 1990s.

The Workers' Charter

Nevertheless the consciousness of the need to form disciplined alliances in the country to bring about change is spreading through discussions of the workers' charter and the constitutional guidelines. People are asking why the ANC or the SACP are important, why workers should support the defiance campaign, how to turn the living wage campaign into a political campaign which will strike at the heart of the cheap labour system, what is the alternative to apartheid.
AC: What is happening about the workers' charter? What does COSATU feel about the charter being circulated by the SACP and SACTU?
JN: To be honest, since our congress we have not in a very conscious way taken up the debates on those charters, although there is a lot of work being done in individual unions. But in our congress it was felt that rather than defining what should be in a workers' charter we should build the debate in such a way that the charter would be the product of the workers on the ground, not just workers organised in trade unions but workers everywhere — unemployed workers, workers in other formations, community or trade union, including NACTU. We're leaving it at a very open-ended process.
AC: But you have no objection to the SACP and SACTU charters circulating?
JN: Absolutely not. They will make a contribution.
AC: At the last COSATU congress a message from the SACP was very warmly received by the delegates. Can you say why the Party's message should have had such a warm reception?
JN: The relationship with the SACP has never been debated within COSATU structures because we live in a society which stifles debate and criminalises it. Undoubtedly, the Party commands a lot of support among many of our grassroots activists. This reflects the general drive amongst our members, including the senior and middle-layer leadership, to transform

South Africa, and that means dealing with the issue of transition to a socialist society. It is not so much because the Party is a party but because it represents what is popular amongst the people. It is not individuals but the policies put forward and there is undoubtedly active discussion of all these issues in COSATU at the moment.

AC: How is the campaign for trade union unity progressing? COSATU has done everything possible to secure the participation of NACTU in the workers' summits, but without success. Within NACTU there seems to be sharp differences between those unions associated with black consciousness, and now, according to reports, NACTU has fallen into the hands of people who regard themselves as being within the fold of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Under the circumstances what are the chances of bringing about one trade union federation in the country, which is COSATU's principal objective?

JN: I think a lot depends on NACTU. We would disband COSATU tomorrow in furtherance of the policy of "One Industry, One Union, One Country, One Federation". We have always believed that there is more uniting workers than dividing them. We have to deal with the reality, however, that there may be other individuals or groups of people who are not equally committed to that objective. We have attempted through the workers' summits and the campaigns against the Labour Relations Act to develop unity in action, and in the different sectors, particularly the metal, food and to some extent the chemical sector, we have made concrete overtures to our counterpart unions in NACTU to unite in action around, for example, the living wage negotiations that take place. We've not had major success.

A Timetable for Unity

At the first summit NACTU pulled out at the last minute, but 11 of their affiliates came. They came to the second summit, but afterwards there was a lot of political division over the action which should have been taken. The resignation of Camay reflects these divisions. We are still open to discussing with comrades in NACTU a timetable that would lead to broadening the unity of South African workers, removing whatever political obstacles there may be and creating one united federation.

AC: How important is the campaign against the Labour Relations Act?

JN: It is our central campaign. The Act is being used by the regime to defeat the trade union movement, to provide capital with the weapons to disorganise the labour movement. It is an attempt to reverse at factory-floor level the rights we have negotiated over the last decade. The apartheid state identifies us as a major threat to its continued rule and the law attempts to create a climate that will justify state action against us. And that is what is happening if you look at the railway strike, the open attacks on workers, the public violence which in many cases is started by the police themselves. Our members have been attacked.

One of the major demands of the defiance campaign is that the LRA should be scrapped, and we need to link up this campaign with the broader campaigns against apartheid repression and with the demands made by the Mass Democratic Movement.

AC: What impact have the recent developments in the socialist countries had on trade unionists in South Africa?

JN: The issue has been discussed in a number of our affiliates and in a number of structures, but not in a formal way. From the initial feedback we get the impression that the events in eastern Europe are not regarded as an indication that socialism has failed or that there is a crisis within socialism, but rather that there is a crisis within the bureaucracy. The socialist countries have to provide avenues for people's creativity.

As we see it, socialism has shown that it is able at an overall level to upgrade the people's standards of living and that is particularly important for us in South Africa. Everyone wants to have a house but we have more than 5 million homeless. Everyone wants to be educated, but 50% of the population is illiterate. Everyone wants medical care.

Obviously it has been shown that over-centralisation is a problem, but we realise that it is only when we have democratic control over aspects of production and planning and distribution of wealth that we'll be able to meet the basic needs of the people. So in that sense people still see that only socialism can deliver that.

— Interview conducted in
December 1989

The Real Challenge of Feminism

by Hilda Bernstein

IT IS NOT THE CONTEMPORARY movement in Britain and America that brought me to feminism. I have been a feminist for more than sixty years.

There are those who think that because there are people who interpret a theory in bizarre ways, the theory itself is not valid. If that were so, it would be necessary to reject Marxism because of Pol Pot. Distortions of feminism come from two opposing directions: reactionaries maintain there is no basis for feminism, nothing for women to complain about: while on the extreme left there are women who blame men for everything and state that if women take over, all will change; while the Western media ridicule feminists to make the whole movement seem absurd.

Feminism has no single and generally recognised meaning, but its common ingredient is that women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex; and this is the essence of feminism. Anyone who accepts that and wishes to remove that injustice is a feminist — men as well as women.

Feminism is a movement for the elimination of sex-based injustice, whatever the reason for that injustice, which springs from many different sources. These are not confined purely to the economic basis of society. This is why changing that economic basis can only eliminate certain areas of women's oppression, and these mainly in the economic sphere, in wages and job circumstances, and in education. But it does not automatically change human relationships, nor eliminate deeply entrenched convention, habits and cultural prejudices. Some of these do spring from capitalist/imperialist/

colonialist conditions and some are based in feudal and in tribal customs. But whatever their original source, they persist in society long after the source has been removed and the basis changed.

Feminists — like Marxists — are not a homogeneous mass, and it is scarcely necesary to waste space debating about the way-out groups — the so-called 'radical' feminists, or the men-haters. The mainstream feminist movement does not set out to compete with men, is not concerned with acquiring special benefits for women. It is concerned with eliminating the injustice women suffer as a result of being female. This applies also to feminists in South Africa in the mass democratic movement; South African feminists are not striving simply to free women from apartheid discrimination, but to free the people as a whole. And to do this they must also organise to fight discrimination against women.

Slow Pace of Change

This is one of my basic differences with the article on 'Feminism and the Struggle for National Liberation' by Clara, in your issue number 118, and with her interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. In writing about peasants Lenin said that it is easier to change production relations than to change cultural patterns, because they have a life of their own over and above the change in industrial relations. The same analysis applies to the position of women: it is slower, and takes longer, to change such attitudes.

In Marxism, consciousness is a tangible force for transforming society. Clara is wrong when she states that the reason so much still needs to be done in socialist countries for women's emancipation is because 'the objective conditions have not matured sufficiently for full women's emancipation to take root'. She is implying that consciousness is totally a reflection of objective conditions, and that a change in these objective conditions of itself will produce a new consciousness. This implies that equality will therefore be established automatically. Marx says that consciousness does arise in the first place from concrete conditions, but once it arises, it becomes in itself a force for the transforming of social conditions. If this were not so, we would not be able to change society in the way we wish — we would have to wait for the conditions to mature, because our social consciousness would be based solely on capitalist ideology; we would not be able to see beyond the objective conditions.

Ideas arise out of reality but then become themselves a force for social change. It is not only the objective conditions in socialist countries that have 'not yet matured sufficiently', but human consciousness, the way people think; neither have they campaigned sufficiently to counter prejudices of the past. There is room for a feminist movement in socialist countries as well, to mobilise continuously to fight backward ideas; feminist theory plays an important role in changing consciousness of women's oppression.

'Feminism', states Clara, 'is a reformist ideology that appeals strongly to middle class women.' Yes, some women fall in the category of a middle class ideology because they do not question the fundamental basis of the social order. But this is only one strand of feminism. She calls for a class alliance of women led by the black working class women around issues they are most affected by. It has a workerist ring to it. If this is so, it follows that the position of women moulds group consciousness, and that implies that only workers accept socialism.

You cannot necessarily extrapolate from the theory of the role of the working class in the socially advanced section of production to place black working class women as the vanguard of the women's movement. The largest single area of employment for these women is domestic labour, the most backward, unmechanised form of work, and one where each individual worker must contend with a different employer. The situation must be looked at concretely, not advanced dogmatically as a consequence of Marxism-Leninism. The case mut be proven, not asserted from theory.

How are black women to become leaders? Not by saying so, but by taking leading roles in trade union activity. This requires more than calling for women to organise, as COSATU has fully recongnised; it means male-dominated unions must consciously make room for and acknowledge the need for women to participate more actively at every level. But this requires more than the resolutions of COSATU leadership — the consciousness of women themselves must be raised, and thus women must be organised as a force to struggle against backward ideas both among women and among men. This is one of the main tasks of the feminist movement, requiring constant propaganda and efforts to integrate more women, most specifically at leadership level. It is not just a straight economic question.

The Double Day

The double day, Clara states, 'constitutes another aspect of working class women's oppression'. While in South Africa there are sections of middleclass women who are relieved of the bind of the double day through domestic assistance, the double day in fact burdens women of all classes not only throughout the Western world but in socialist countries, cutting across class lines; it burdens women in professional and managerial posts as well as those of the working class. As a fundamental feature of women's oppression it cuts across class and class systems.

'Our theory,' Clara states, 'guides us to redefine motherhood and fatherhood in non-oppressive ways'. I do not know what that means. However, definitions do not change reality. Marxism states that reality is primary and consciousness reflects it, not vice versa.

And what is meant by the statement that 'It is only under people's power that such welfare services (child care, education opportunities, maternity leave, etc) can be provided?' What is meant by 'people's power'? Does she mean democratic rule? Is there 'people's power' in Sweden, which has many of the most advanced of such welfare services anywhere in the world? We battle for them under existing conditions because it is possible to obtain at least some of these services. They exist to a greater or lesser extent in many countries because of concerted effort.

Women's emancipation is not simply a woman's struggle and should not be defined as being exclusively their concern. Clara does not deal with the cultural and social patterns of men's behaviour in relation to women, nor with the question of changing men's consciousness, nor with the role of men in participating in the struggle for women's emancipation. She states that aggression against women — rape, battery, pass raids, etc — is oppressive violence which our theory guides us to counter with revolutionary violence. How do you use revolutionary violence against oppressive violence? This needs to be explained. It is neither an adequate explanation of nor solution to the subject of male violence against women (it exists in socialist countries) and she fails to deal with it in the end.

The organisation that first drew women of all colours together — the Federation of South African Women — recognised from its very inception that the liberation of women from all forms of oppression is an integral part of the transformation of South African society, and not as something to be addressed as a separate issue, or only in a post-apartheid South Africa. "Inherent in the principles of the Federation", writes Karin Chubb (a member of that largely middleclass white women's organisation, the Black Sash) "is a commitment to women's issues which can in due course serve as the basis for a common consciousness across the divisions of race and class. That is its great emancipatory potential, the realisation of which is fraught with difficulties in the present situation... Too often feminism is dismissed as bourgeois, irrelevant and divisive." And with those statements I agree.

A Constant Struggle

Feminism opposes traditional ideas relating to the role and place of women; and because people's ideas and desires have formed on a background of tradition, it therefore must appear to oppose many people's accepted dreams and wishes. Because women's oppression has a customary and traditional background as well as an economic foundation it has greater depth and significance than the rigid economical dogma that Clara propounds. It requires a more thorough-going change of culture, of custom, of social consciousness in addition to social change; an attack and exposure of the prejudice which has been built into books, in films, in art, in the presentation of news, in the interpretations of history, in social relations, in education, and in the use of language. This confronts us with the necessity to carry on a constant struggle in today's society, while at the same time we challenge the reformist strand, or the approach to feminism that reflects only class aspirations and does not challenge the basis of the economic exploitation of women. We demand the same rights that men demand, not the right to be exploited equally with them.

The reaction to feminism's challenge to all the patterns reflected above is to accuse feminists of divisiveness and pettiness; women are laughed at when they raise questions of the use of language, and 'put down' when they say that women have been omitted from the pages of history; so that women become inhibited about challenging sexism and sexist violence, of social oppression within the family and of the necessity for sexual rights. These issues are not separate from the struggle for national liberation, nor from the question of the establishment of women's rights after liberation.

Finally a word about words — an appeal to those who speak and write. I found Clara's article difficult to evaluate because of the sociological/political jargon that obscures rather than illuminates. As a result nothing emerges clearly because it is obfuscated in theoretical dogma wrapped in academic cliches.

In a journal about women of the 'third' world an article stated that woman is confronted by six mountains. The first is colonialism; the second is reactionary customs, whether feudally or tribally based; the third is backwardness (and 41% of African women in our country are illiterate); the fourth is colour; the fifth is men; and the sixth — herself.

We women must start climbing.

Funeral of La Pasionaria

The funeral of Dolores Ibarruri — La Pasionaria — in November, 1989, was a moving demonstration of the deep love and affection the workers and democrats of Spain felt for one of the most outstanding and gifted revolutionaries of this century. It was a demonstration, too, of their unshakeable determination to continue to fight for the great ideals Comrade Dolores had come to symbolise — freedom, social justice, peace and socialism.

FROM THE MONDAY EVENING to the Thursday afternoon, over 70,000 filed passed the bier while the body of La Pasionaria lay in state at the headquarters of the Spanish Communist Party. There were hundreds of wreaths from political parties and mass organisations; thousands of simple floral tributes from workers and peasants and democrats of all political tendencies. On the day of the funeral, representatives from communist parties in all four corners of the globe, including a delegation from the South African Communist Party, took turns in mounting a guard of honour at the bier.

A crush of people massed outside the entrance to the building, waiting for the hearse to emerge. Tens and tens of thousands more jammed the kilometre-long route from the Party's headquarters to Columbus Square. So great was the throng that the funeral procession many times came to a halt as the people pressed forward to strew red carnations on the funeral carriage. Shouts of 'Dolores! Dolores!' and 'No Pasaran!' filled the air. There was a forest of flags and banners — Republican flags, red flags, flags from the different regions of Spain, trade union banners and the banners of mass democratic movements. And, most moving of all, the battle standards of the International Brigades, held proudly aloft by veterans of the civil war. A rolling thunder of applause and cries of 'Viva! Viva!' marked their passage down the avenue as the crowd saluted those who were the very embodiment of international solidarity.

A multitude of men and women, young and old, workers, peasants, people from all classes in Spanish society, packed Columbus Square from one end to the other, awaiting the arrival of the cortege. Many could not restrain their grief and wept openly, quietly, as the body of their beloved La Pasionaria passed by. The host of mourners stood in deep silence as they listened to the poems, the music and the poignant farewell orations. Then, at the end, came the voice of La Pasionaria herself, a recording from a speech she had made on the occasion of the celebration of her ninetieth birthday: "Many thanks for attending this event, and now I am going to sing you a song". Then, after a revolutionary hymn sung in a voice surprisingly strong and true: "And now we are all going to sing the Internationale..."

Turbulent History

Comrade Ibarruri's life spanned almost a hundred years of turbulent human history. The daughter of a miner, Dolores was born on the 9 December 1895 in Gallarta, a village in the heart of the Basque mining region. The merciless exploitation and the savage repression which met every struggle of the miners to improve their conditions forged her spirit of rebellion and protest. Her family made great sacrifices to send her to school. Poverty forced her to leave at the age of fifteen to work first as a seamistress, then as a maid in a household with many children. At the age of twenty she married Julian Ruiz, a socialist miner, and moved to set up home in Somorrosto. Julian and Dolores had six children, four of whom died soon after birth.

Dolores made her first contact with Marxism in the library of the House of the People. She joined the Basque Socialist Party (which was later renamed the Basque Communist Party) and soon became part of the leadership. Comrade Ibarruri was a delegate to the founding conference of the Spanish Communist Party (CPE) in 1921 and was elected to the Central Committee at the Fourth Congress in 1932.

She wrote her first article, entitled 'The Class Struggle', at the age of twenty-two, for a local paper, *The Basque Miner*, under the pseudonym 'Pasionaria', a name which was later to become part of the history of Spain and of the international working-class movement. Later, in 1931, she became an editor of *Mundo Obrero* (Workers' World), the organ of the Spanish Communist Party, with particular responsibility for promoting the interests of women. She later became editor-in-chief.

Dolores helped organise national support for the miners of the Asturias in the great anti-fascist insurrection of 1934, and then campaigned tirelessly for solidarity and aid for the victims of the savage repression which followed the crushing of the strike. She was detained and prosecuted on two occasions for her activity.

In 1936, Pasionaria was elected to the Cortes as a deputy for the Asturias, one of 17 Communists elected when the Popular Front swept to power. (On her return to Spain in 1977, after 38 years in exile, the miners of the Asturias again sent comrade Dolores to represent them in the new, democratic Cortes).

Pasionaria presided at the first Spanish Congress of Women against Fascism and War and headed the Spanish delegation to the World Congress of that organisation held in Paris in 1934. The Women's Anti-Fascist movement she helped found was to prove indispensable in mobilising both men and women during the civil war.

The Franco revolt and the open armed support Franco received from Hitler and Mussolini catapulted the Spanish people into the forefront of the international struggle against fascism. Pasionaria's political and organisational skills, her passionate oratory, became formidable weapons in the defence of the democratic Republic. She gave expression to the deepest emotions of the Spanish people. "Better to die on your feet than live on your knees!" and "NO PASARAN!" echoed round the world, and continue to echo to this day, wherever men and women fight for freedom and democracy.

In Exile

The defeat of the Republic — the prelude to the Second World War — drove Ibarruri into exile. Based in Moscow, she helped organise the underground in Spain and abroad. Comrade Dolores also played an active and prominent role on the Secretariat of the Communist International, together with Jose Diaz, Dimitrov, Manuilski, Togliatti, Thorez and other famous communist leaders.

In 1942, Pasionaria was appointed General Secretary of the CPE on the death of Jose Diaz. That same year, her son Reuben was killed at Stalingrad, fighting as an officer in the Red Army. Dolores served as General Secretary until 1960, when she was appointed President of the Party, a post she still held at the time of her death.

Comrade Ibarruri was a passionate believer in the unity of the working class, in the need for unity in action of all democratic forces opposed to fascism. A life-long opponent of sectarianism and dogmatism, Comrade Dolores always stressed that nothing stood still, that everything was in the process of change, and that communists must be ready to develop policies, tactics and strategies which took new realities into account. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that she was among the first to advocate the policy of national reconciliation, a policy which helped to establish a new democratic order after the death of General Franco.

La Pasionaria died at the age of 93, after an heroic life devoted to the cause of peace, freedom and socialism. She came from the people, and stayed with the people, sharing their oppression, their struggles, their triumphs and their defeats. Her faith in the people remained unshakeable, however dark the hour. She loved them, and they loved her in return.

Dolores Ibarruri, La Pasionaria, Communist and internationalist, belongs to all humanity. She was indeed 'A flower of the 20th Century'.

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DOCUMENTS

THE WORKER'S FLAG

The following report was printed in New Nation *on January 26, 1990:*

The significant support enjoyed by the South African Communist Party (SACP) among the oppressed masses could pave the way for the cooperation and ultimate unity in action with the religious sector.

This is the view of the University of Cape Town's Religion and Society professor, Charles Villa-Vicencio.

In his paper titled: "The Worker's Flag" he presented an overview of the SACP's contribution in the struggle for justice over the past 60 years, particularly in fighting against the exploitation of the workers. He also acknowledged the prophetic role of the church in the struggle for justice and peace in South Africa.

Villa-Vicencio believes that unless unity is achieved now, the differences and divisions among the marginalised people might persist after the political transition.

According to him the church could be accused of creating divisions among the oppressed by distancing itself from the SACP which, like other anti-apartheid organisations, enjoys support among the oppressed. He also cited the refusal by some of the church leaders refusing to march in front of the Red flag.

"Sufficient common purpose and co-operation must, however, be found if oppressed people are to bring the present regime to an end," he said.

Villa-Vicencio warned the churches to safeguard against inheriting "the myths created around communism in the western world".

Turning to the South African situation, he said: "Church leaders will do well to acknowledge the significant support which the South African Communist Party (SACP) has won through years of dogged loyalty to the liberation of the oppressed."

He pointed out that the party have been "fighting the cause of the oppressed earlier and more effectively than the churches. When the church was firmly on the side of the rulers of the nation and industry, the SACP was on the side of workers and the oppressed."

He conceded that the SACP had weaknesses during the struggle for freedom. Nevertheless the party was no exception in this regard, according to him.

"But the most cursory historical assessment of the South African struggle shows that the beam in the eye of the churches is larger than the mote in the eye of the party. This at least is the judgement of many people in this country."

Despite the government-backed mining magnates using repressive measures to exploit racial inequalities and drive a wedge between the skilled and unskilled workers, the SACP survived to pursue the struggle of the working class, according to Villa-Vicencio.

But like Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko the SACP ultimately committed itself to the notion of a unified, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

"They were formative in trade unionism, ministered to those in prison and served the unemployed long before the churches acknowledged their responsibility towards the poor and oppressed."

Appealing for unity, he said: "The day of liberation in South Africa must be a day when all people unite in their willingness to put aside old animosities and prejudices.

"To this end the church is obliged to eliminate suspicion about those who support the SACP — some of whom are also members of the churches."

Villa-Vicencio believes the healthy and spirited debate between the people of different ideological persuasions forms the basis of democracy and the hope for a new South Africa.

The cult of personality and dictatorship must be eliminated wherever it occurs — whether in church or party, he said.

"But if freedom, truth and justice are to be hallmarks of the church in South Africa it is to come to terms with the crucial contribution that the SACP has made in fighting against oppression in South Africa."

Highlighting the non-racial character of the communist party and its historical struggle for the oppressed, he said: "The party was non-racial and

African when the church hierachy was racist and white. The party was with the people and of the people when the church was part of the colonial process and in the pockets of the rich."

Appealing to the conscience of the christian community, he said: "The Bible suggests that those who suffer and die on behalf of the weak and despised are the martyrs of God. Those who struggle for a just and decent society are the children of God."

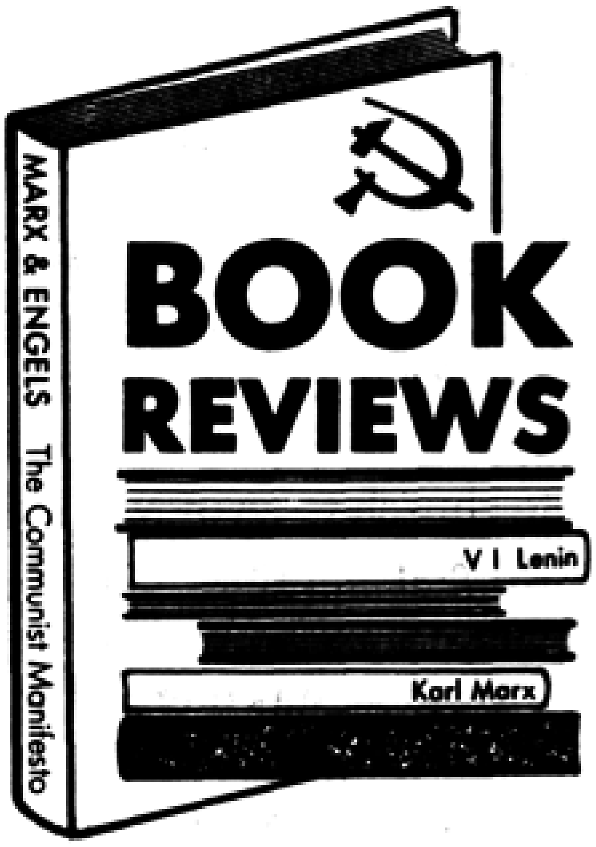
He continued saying: "The time has come for the church to acknowledge the martyrs, children and chosen of God, who find their political identity within the SACP and other groupings outside religion.

"To this end Christians need to remember that the gospel has more to do with the social implications of the biblical faith and less with the kind of anachronistic cultural and theological stumbling blocks that drive sincere and thoughtful people out of the church."

— Reprinted from *New Nation* 26.1.1990.

South Africa is an epitome of the class struggle throughout the world. Here Imperial Capital exploits a white skilled proletariat side by side with a large native proletariat. Nowhere else in the proportions obtaining on the world scale do white skilled and dark unskilled meet together in one social milieu as they do in South Africa. And nowhere else are the problems so acute of two streams of the working class with vastly unequal standards of life jostling side by side, and the resultant race prejudices and animosities interfering and mixing with the class struggle.

David Ivon Jones in *Communism in South Africa,*
an ISL document presented to the Comintern in 1921.


MARX & ENGELS The Communist Manifesto
BOOK
REVIEWS
V I Lenin
Karl Marx

GREAT LIVES, GREAT DEEDS

Samora Machel — A Biography

by Iain Christie
PANAF (Zed Press Ltd), London and New Jersey, 1989, pp. 175.

The assassination of Eduardo Mondlane, founder of Frelimo, in an explosion in Dar es Salaam on 3 February 1969, began a trail of counter-revolutionary events in the history of the Mozambican people which reached their climax with the assassination of Samora Machel, first president of an independent Mozambique, on 19 October, 1986.

The dramatic nature of the two events makes the Mozambican revolutionary leaders, perhaps more than any other on the African continent, the most targeted by imperialism. True, Angola has suffered uncomparably through the activities of UNITA, yet neither Angola nor any other African country (including Guinea Bissau) experienced such a concentrated campaign to rob the revolution of its leadership.

Both assassinations were, of course, not meant to be seen as the direct work of the enemy, yet all the signs were there.

During the period of the death of Mondlane (1968-70), Frelimo was faced with ferocious internal assaults and disruption by agents of the Portuguese secret police, PIDE. In 1968 alone, two internal rebellions were organised by influential personalities within Frelimo, one of them the Frelimo provincial secretary for Cabo Delgado, and the other a teacher at a secondary school in Dar es Salaam. That the movement had survived and actually grew stronger was to a large extent due to Mondlane's leadership ability. One day, however, early in the morning of the 3 February 1969, Mondlane collected his mail from the Frelimo office in Dar es Salaam and went to the home of a friend where he wanted to be able to work undisturbed. Among the mail he took was a book parcel addressed to him, and when he tore off the wrapping, the parcel exploded killing him instantly.

It was later established by the Tanzanian Criminal Investigation Department that the assassination was planned by the Portuguese secret police, through the agency of a man named Casimiro Monteiro. He was a professional killer for PIDE who had been involved in the war in Spain (on the side of fascist Franco) and was wanted by the British police as a murder suspect in connection with the death of a Mozambican refugee in Britain. After the 1974 coup in Portugal, Monteiro fled to South Africa where he subsequently joined up with the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) to fight against the Frelimo government. Monteiro was tried in absentia by a Frelimo court and sentenced to 28 years.

During the period of the death of Samora Machel (1986), the South African government was involved in a frantic propaganda attempt to discredit the sovereignty and integrity of Mozambique. Despite the accord which had been signed by President Machel with the South African government guaranteeing that no destabilising activities were to be tolerated by the signatories, South African propaganda consistently issued threats against the leadership of the Mozambique government until, one day in October, the world learnt of the tragic plane crash in which one of the passengers was President Samora Machel. The South African Broadcasting Corporation announced the news even before the relatives of the deceased had been informed. Only twelve days before the plane crash, the South African Defence Minister, Magnus Malan, referring to work done by units of Umkhonto We Sizwe in the eastern Transvaal, said:

> If President Machel chooses landmines, South Africa will react accordingly".

Then President Machel's plane ploughed into a hillside at Mbuzini in the Transvaal under circumstances which everybody in the world, including South Africa, thought to be mysterious.

To add insult to injury, the propaganda agencies of the aparteid state went ahead to give a series of inaccurate suggestions as to how and why the plane crashed on South African territory. First it was asserted that the plane had crashed in a thunderstorm; then the story changed to the Soviet pilot having been drunk; later the Bureau for Information suggested that the Soviet-built Tupolev 134 had obsolete navigational equipment, etc. etc. These conflicting versions of the event of course did not absolve the South African government from suspicion of complicity.

This suspicion became deeper following the report of an enquiry involving Mozambique, South Africa and the Soviet Union, which was issued after study of the plane's black box flight recorders and the Maputo control tower recordings. Both these unquestionable sources of information revealed that President Machel's plane was following a very high frequency signal beacon which the crew thought was the one at Maputo airport, whereas it was not. Why this mysterious signal was broadcasting on exactly the same frequency as Maputo's, no one understood. All that is known with certainty is that before the South African government informed Mozambique officially of the disaster (which it did nine hours after the incident), their officials had gone to the scene of the plane crash and were, by their own admission, collecting documents from the wreckage. They also made incisions in the necks of some of the people on board for reasons that have never yet been revealed.

Thus, like the first president of Frelimo and his own inspirer (Eduardo Mondlane), Samora Machel died at the hands of the enemy.

The book under review is a preliminary effort by one of the journalists who have been closely connected with the Mozambican revolution since its pre-independence days, to place the life of Samora Machel in its broader historical context, emphasizing the critical role he played in the Mozambican revolution. Christie had been with Machel in some of the liberated zones under the administration of Frelimo. After Mozambican independence, he moved from Tanzania, where he had been based, to work with the Mozambique national news agency (AIM) and later with the external service of Radio Mozambique. He is therefore uniquely placed for the good job he has done in paying tribute to Samora Machel.

An Ordinary Boy

Christie tells the story of an ordinary Mozambican boy who grew up to be president of his country. Born 29 September 1933, at Chilembene, in what is now known as the Ghokwe district of Gaza province, Samora Machel was the third child but, unlike his brothers who worked in the South African mines, remained in Mozambique to help his family and to acquire the limited education that was available to Africans under Portuguese colonialism. In the words of his father, "when he was a boy he was a good, hard worker. He used to look after cattle and work on the farm".

Samora's political consciousness developed at an early age as a result of stories told to him by his father about the heroism of his ancestors who had fought against the colonialists and won a place of honour in folk tales: Soshangane, Ngungunyana, Maguiguane, and others. By the time he reached puberty, he had observed that under Portuguese domination the peasants were doomed to perpetual misery. Samora told an interviewer in 1974:

> "It wasn't the people who produced the crops who fixed the prices. It wasn't they who chose who they should sell to... All the Africans in our region were boxed in by the colonial administration. All the cereals produced by Africans were bought by traders recruited by the administrators. The traders wanted to buy but didn't want to go direct to the producers. The administration fixed the prices... (and we) were obliged to sell our products to the traders at prices fixed by the administration." (p.5)

Samora joined the clandestine political organisations in Maputo. When Eduardo Mondlane visited Mozambique as an official of the United Nations, and took the opportunity to meet some Mozambicans, Samora Machel was one of those who had discussions with him. By then, the Portuguese secret police were on Samora's trail, searching for him in order to arrest him. He left Mozambique via Swaziland to join up in Tanzania with Frelimo which had been formed under the leadership of Mondlane on 25 June 1962.

Machel was given a lift to Dar es Salaam on an ANC chartered plane in which an ANC cadre had to give up his seat for "a thin, energetic young man" who had said he wanted to join the Frelimo forces. After his military training, Machel rose to become the main training officer and commander of the Frelimo fighting forces. One of his colleagues in those days confessed that "within a few days we realised that in Samora we were dealing with a leader" (p.24).

Liberation War

It was this leader who, collectively with others, led the liberation war in Mozambique to its eventual triumph. From the training camps at Kongwa to the Presidential residence in Maputo, Machel was consistently an exemplary leader, both in word and deed. Frelimo soldiers admired him precisely because he still shared with them, even as President, the dust of some of the trenches in the war against the armed bandits. He had learnt from the struggle, and he subsequently taught the struggle many lessons which, today, are almost taken for granted.

Samora Machel learnt quickly to identify the enemy not by the colour of its skin. Throughout his political career he spoke and fought against tribalism, regionalism and narrow nationalist ideas. In the context of the history of African independence, he was a leader of a special type. And this is precisely the quality that the apartheid forces could not tolerate or trust — they never trusted him even after he signed the Nkomati Accord with them.

The proximity of Mozambique to South Africa contributed to the development of Samora's political consciousness. Again, in his own words:

> "I lost many relatives in South Africa. Some returned with tuberculosis, without limbs, mutilated, blind, completely useless, and without indemnity. Others died in South Africa, including my eldest brother. When he died in the South African mines my father received a note from the administration to say that he should go and collect $40 indemnity. But they said that they couldn't hand over the whole amount all at once. He could only have $10 and the remaining $30 would stay in the cash box at the administration and he could go and request small amounts as and when he needed them." (p.6)

At the age of nine years (in 1942) Samora attended a rural school on the Limpopo riverside where he went up to the third year of primary education. Later he went to a Roman Catholic Mission school to study for grade four qualifications. Few Mozambicans could reach that level. And Samora, as remembered by some of his school mates at that stage, was known as "The Rebel". As Christie writes, even by that time there were "signs of a budding politician in him", manifested in his periodical refusal to do those things which he thought the school authorities gave no room for democratic participation by the students.

Although, like Nelson Mandela, he had a passion for boxing as a sport, like him he never developed to be a Joe Louis or a Mohammed Ali, but became a leader of his people's struggle for freedom. In 1952 Samora began a nursing course in the then Lourenco Marques, where he was attached to the Miguel Bombarda Hospital. In 1956 he became a full-time nurse and was then posted to the small hospital on Inhaca island across the bay from Maputo. There "he settled down in an informal marriage with Sorita Tchaiakomo, who bore him four children".

It was when he worked as a nurse that Samora's political consciousness developed into revolutionary consciousness. The conditions themselves led him on the path of revolution. Speaking about his experience at this time, he said:

> "Our people were used in the hospital as guinea pigs for new drugs and certain operations, which if successful could later be applied to the bourgeoisie in the private clinics and consultancies... Apart from some very cursory examination the patient was treated in accordance with his economic means". (p.11).

Iain Christie has provided a sterling service to the Mozambican people with this book and it is to be hoped that it will be translated for the benefit of other peoples. There are gaps in the narrative, inevitably, because President Machel died before Christie had the opportunity to interview him for a comprehensive biography project. It is to be hoped that these gaps will be filled in coming editions of the book.

Mzala

A SOVIET STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

A.G. Cheremin, L.B. Saratovskaya, N.P. Zemskov, Sovremennaya literatura YUAR: idei bor'by i protesta [The Contemporary Literature of South Africa: Ideas of Struggle and Protest].

Edited by I.D. Nikiforova. Moscow: Nauka, 1988. — 231 pp.

This book is the first monograph on South African literature in Soviet scholarship. But if one were to search for its hereditary links one would have to go back quite far in time — almost to the beginnings of South African literature itself. As early as 1899 the Russian newspaper *Nizhegorodskiy listok* carried an article on O. Schreiner. Its author, who was highly impressed by his South African colleague, was no less a writer than Maxim

Gorky. *Niva, russkaya misl, Literaturniye vechera* and other journals of the time published translations of Schreiner's works and more articles on her. In the course of later years Soviet readers have consistently been given the chance to acquaint themselves with the books of many of South Africa's best writers translated with commendable rapidity and supplied with competent and informative introductions.

P. Abrahams' *Path of Thunder* inspired the Azérbaijani composer Kara-Karaev to create a beautiful ballet. Dramatic versions of G. Gordon's *Let the Day Perish* were shown in Soviet theatres of the '50s and '60s with remarkable success. Since the early '60s South African literature has been a constant object of interest to Soviet specialists. Revealing chapters on different aspects of it have invariably been included in every collective work on African literatures published in the Soviet Union in recent decades. There is also S.P. Kartuzov's book *Alex La Guma* (1978).

The Contemporary Literature of South Africa... shows every sign of having benefited from such a respectable heritage and of having taken the South Africanist tradition to a higher level.

The authors' purpose was to analyse post World War II progressive South African literature in the English language. However, the short but dense first chapter on "Literature up to 1945" (pp. 7-25) plus the panoramic approach throughout — the great concreteness and thoroughness in the analysis of progressive English language literature per se notwithstanding — make the book a worthy, even if not exhaustive, history of South African literature as a whole.

The Historic Context

The scholars' guiding principle has been clearly stated from the start: "The character of South African literature, the stages and level of its development can only be understood and determined within the context of the country's historical development and the socio-economic environment of its population" (p.7). It seems that the success of the book derives mainly from the observance of this formula. The collective have side-stepped the pitfall of drifting into a mechanical pulling of strings to demonstrate parallels, of dogmatically adjusting historical facts and literary phenomena. Their thesis has manifested itself instead as a profoundly felt, factually established and convincingly shown correspondence.

A.G. Cheremin and L.B. Saratovskaya have been able as a result to give a logical periodisation of South African progressive literature, and draw an authentic portrait of it at every particular stage of its evolution ("Literature after 1945", pp.26-52). The reader is led through a path of development where an increasingly democratic literature matures into a literature of protest and later explodes into a literature of resistance. Progressive South African literature has advantageously been presented from the additional point of view of a literature that has throughout its history been destined to oppose a colonial literature preaching ideas of racism, anti-communism, and propagating the stereotypes of bourgeois mass-culture.

In the specific conditions of South Africa the long debated issue of art versus ideology has been shown to have had no alternative solution: for every progressive writer ideological commitment becomes an inherent element of his art.

The six chapters that follow are individual portraits of Alan Paton (pp.53-65), Nadine Gordimer (pp.66-89), Gerald Gordon (pp.90-100), Jack Cope (pp.101-119), Peter Abrahams (pp.120-148) and Alex La Guma (pp.149-178). Together they form a truly representative artistic gallery, having passed through which one comes out enriched by one's increased knowledge and stimulatingly new ideas on South African literature.

Under the title "Documentary Literature" (pp.179-190) A.G. Cheremin analyses two of its basic genres — the political novel and political short-story. He has examined the evolution of the liberation struggle theme basing his study predominantly on the works of R. Rive, J. Matthews and T.H. Gwala. One regrettable omission is that the already sizeable and very impressive body of "prison literature" has somehow remained outside the scope of the scholar's attention. There is also some contradiction (or is it an overlooked imprecision of expression?) in the otherwise careful and knowledgable discussion of R. Rive's novel *Emergency*. The author emphasises the genuine individuality and vitality of Rive's characters, pointing out that, contrary to the accusations of "sketchiness" which some critics raise against the most politicized South African writers, Rive's characters are not "figures-symbols, but living people with a whole contradictory complex of emotions" (p.184). He goes on to say, however, that the novel is not totally free of shortcomings, one of them being "a certain sketchiness, an inadequate depth of psychological analysis" (p.185).

Protest and Resistance Poetry

One of the major trends in progressive South African literature after World War II is considered to be the "Poetry of Protest and Resistance" (pp. 191-

208). The chapter discusses three generations of poets: W. Plomer, U. Krige, etc; C. Themba, B. Modisane, D. Brutus, M. Kunene, I. Jonker, K. Kgositsile, etc; A. Nortje, O.J. Mtshali, W.M. Serote, etc. Whatever differences or nuances may exist in their political and aesthetic ideals, their poetry is shown to be consistently anti-racist. The successful marriage of autochthonous and foreign literary tradition (L.B. Saratovskaya has discerned the influence of V. Mayakovsky, P. Neruda, B. Brecht, N. Guillen, A. Neto) has contributed to making South African protest poetry an organic whole which has become an integral part of the world literary process.

There is a last chapter on "The Development of South African Drama after World War II" (pp. 209-225). It follows the emergence of the first Coloured and African amateur and semi-professional theatre companies in the '50s, and especially in the '60s and early '70s (Serpent Players, Cape Flats Theatre, AMDA, Phoenix Players, MAD, Africa-70, Studio-71, TECON, PET, MDALI, etc.), and discusses their activities under the existing segregation laws and severe censorship. L.B. Saratovskaya gives her interpretation of some of the most important plays of B. Leshoaya, G. Kente, R. Rive, F. Dike, A. Fugard and others.

There are a few inaccuracies one would like to see rectified in a possible future edition of the book: e.g., on p. 23 *The African Communist* figures as a newspaper (elsewhere it has been correctly referred to); on p. 28 Nelson Mandela has been "awarded" a Nobel Prize. But these are obviously trifling errors one would condescendingly wave away if meeting with a mediocre creation, but becomes meticulous and demanding enough not to disregard when confronted with the self-set high standard of a profound, praiseworthy work. And this is what the reviewed book undoubtedly is.

Emilia Ilieva
Sofia-Moscow

MERCHANT OF APARTHEID DEATH

Armscor — South Africa's Arms Merchant

by James P. McWilliams, published by Brasseys (UK) 1989.

This is a specialist publication which will be of interest to political and military analysts of the Southern African situation. As such it will have a limited circulation and the author will certainly not become rich on the royalties. When one reads in the preface that the author "received no grants or any monies", one wonders how this former Pentagon officer and scenario writer survives.

Careful readers will soon discover that this is no serious analysis, but a poor attempt at disinformation. The book itself is written in a jumbled fashion, with the same themes recurring throughout on the flimsiest of pretexts. Much of the material is almost anecdotal or based on interviews with Armscor or the SADF — a perfectly valid technique, but one that would be subject to scrutiny by a serious analyst. It is difficult to take this book seriously when the concluding pages include a review of Armscor's environmental protection effort.

Let us briefly review the following aspects of his analysis:

- Armscor itself
- the situation inside South Africa
- the Angolan/Namibian situation
- the role of the West in Armscor's development
- the effect of sanctions

McWilliams' views are slavishly pro-Armscor, to the ludicrous extent of calling the ramshackle "Spookhuis" (Ghost House) of Erasmusrand an "architectural landmark of Pretoria"! His tone throughout is one of admiration and not analysis — at no point does he even list Armscor's main products, or compare them to equivalent international products. In view of the fact that the SADF has twice been outwitted in Angola (in 1976 and 1988) because of weapons limitations (artillery and radar), one must question his positive assessment of every Armscor action.

A similar tone pervades all his analyses of the situation inside South Africa. On page 103 "the only catalyst for change would be... an allencompassing and enforceable economic stranglehold" while on page 128 "the mood of the Afrikaner is the dominant factor in determining which way South Africa will go". The author dismisses the black population of South Africa as a force in the situation — they are "apathetic" and there is no "monolithic body to speak for non-whites" (page 103). Surely a military analyst (as opposed to a propagandist) should review the history and nature of the ANC's armed struggle? If McWilliams' views are indicative of the Pentagon's views then they are seriously out of touch with reality in hoping for "something short of a democratic solution" (page 65).

The Angolan/Namibian situation preoccupies the author, and quite rightly so, given the size and importance of the SADF involvement there, but his political/strategic analysis is flawed and contradictory. For example, on page 101 it is "not in Pretoria's national interests to have an 'unacceptable government' in Windhoek", while by page 119 South Africa is deeply involved in the negotiations which ultimately led to a Swapo victory in the recent elections. One gets the impression that this book has been rushed into print, and one of the reasons may be that he is trying to sell a message (to the South African government and the United States' right wing) that the Angolan/Namibian settlement is in their interests. This tends to be supported by his almost sycophantic reverence throughout the book for Afrikanerdom and PW Botha. (One wonders what FW de Klerk would think of it!)

Turning next to Western involvement in Armscor's development, he talks of "secret United States arms sales to South Africa" (page 21); ....French-SA scientific connection ...."over the Cactus missile" (page 18); and "....a business-as-usual approach between Pretoria and Tel Aviv" (page 57). He makes it quite clear that there has been and continues to be extensive and continuous collusion between South Africa and most Western countries, as well as "Fifth World" countries such as Israel, Taiwan and Chile. Never does he comment on the actions of governments which vote for sanctions in the United Nations, but consistently break the arms embargo. His approach is — if sanctions never worked before, why should they work now? He presents no serious analysis of what genuine arms sanctions would do to South Africa.

His views on the South African economy provide the final comic touch. Anybody writing in 1989 that the "economic picture of South Africa, in reality, looks anything but dim" (page 110) is guilty of the most blatant distortion of reality. McWilliams' view that "Armscor (is) contributing to a strong and viable economy" shows a total lack of appreciation that an important effect of the existing sanctions is to contribute to the major structural economic problems South Africa is now experiencing.

Does this book have any value, apart from trying to understand the disinformation it contains?

The appendices might be useful to academics, as they contain original texts of South African acts of Parliament and UN resolutions on the arms embargo. There is possibly some value in various snippets of information he includes such as:

— Armscor will export tanks and aricraft (page 95)
— the French navy will be active in the southern Atlantic from 1988 to 1993 (page 104)
— a major research and development effort is going into anti-tank weapons (page 75)
— local manufacture of machine tools (page 95)
— the need for mobile radar units (page 118).

Even such items of technical information must be treated with caution, given his penchant for disinformation. He writes that "Armscor has no need to develop nuclear submarines, intermediate-range ballistic missiles, or similar costly and time-consuming weapons", when any serious analyst knows that Armscor is certainly involved in research and development related to submarines, missiles and nuclear weapons.

In fact, part of the value of this book is just what it tries to ignore — computers and electronic, atomic energy and weapons, missiles and satellites. This is clearly where the "real action" is!

D.P.

A FRIEND INDEED

A Far Cry

by Mary Benson
(Viking, London, £14.99)

This is the autobiography of Mary Benson, who has for more than thirty years been a slightly enigmatic figure, with the South African liberation movement but never quite in it. In 1963, she wrote *The African Patriots,* a history of the ANC. A comrade reviewing that work in *The African*

Communist (no 15, p.96), found it regrettable that the task should have been undertaken by an outsider but was nevertheless, on the whole, satisfied with the result. Her history was accurate and sympathetic but there were limits to the political understanding which it showed. She had not grasped the importance of the Freedom Charter or of the alliance with the SACP.

Since then she has had to endure banning, house arrest and exile. Her sympathies have remained unswervingly pro-liberation.

Her autobiography makes it clear that personal relationships have been the key to her story. She is an inveterate hero-worshipper. The feelings which in her youth she had for film stars were replaced in maturity by feelings for successively, Alan Paton, Michael Scott, Nelson Mandela and Bram Fischer. It was they as indiviuals, as much as their ideas, that drew her into the orbit of the liberation struggle.

The story has a strange and moving climax. When Bram Fischer was working underground, his whereabouts known only to a handful of his closest comrades, those comrades decided to put Mary Benson in contact with him, not merely because she was needed to help in his work but also because they thought that seeing her would be good for his morale. For some time she was trusted with knowledge that nobody else outside the Party had and took risks that nobody else outside the Party took — simply so that Bram could have the comfort of being in touch with a friend.

She records that during this time Bram urged her to join the Party, but she refused. She explains her refusal briefly and a little lamely. Twenty years before she had seen Russian officers behave badly to their men and besides "when he patiently explained dialectical materialism, my mind went blank." In other words, she is simply not an ideological person.

Some Marxists have been in the habit of thinking that anyone who is not with us must be against us in everything. That is a mistake. Personal loyalties are the mainsprings of many lives, on our side too.

A Far Cry is a frank and revealing account of one such life. It takes its place as a part of the rich and varied story of our people.

P.M.

LETTERS TO THE
EDITOR

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOBIL STRIKE

from Mthetheleli, Botswana

Dear Editor

On April 26, 1989 Mobil announced it would be selling its South African oil refinery and distribution business. On the surface this was a good move, but put under thorough scrutiny it was in fact a sinister move. The workers at Mobil represented by the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) expressed ill feelings about the manner in which the disinvestment action was being carried out. They saw it would be to the detriment of the workers and stood out against the move until certain conditions were met.

Before we discuss the strike that ensued it is important to get to the actual reasons that Mobil decided to pull out. In 1986 new American investments in South Africa were banned. At the end of 1987 further conditions were enforced on American companies. They had to pay American as well as South African taxes on their South African profits. Mobil therefore saw 72% of their profits eaten up as against 58% before this new rule. A bill is being tabled which proposes to exclude all companies with interests in South Africa from new exploration franchises from oil, gas or coal.

It is against this background that we should view the Mobil pull-out. CWIU called on Mobil to negotiate the terms of its disinvestment and the sale of the business to Gencor. Typical of capitalist recalcitrance, Mobil scoffed at this humble demand and proceeded with its action. Over 650 of the 1,000-strong black workforce at Mobil decided to go on strike. The strike affected about 15 petrol depots in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape. At first, using the old tactic of playing down success, the management underplayed the effects of the strike. But as it began to bite deeper into the pockets of the capitalists and new profits were not forthcoming, they confessed that the strike was having a serious effect.

It acknowledged that the strike had caused some of its stations to dry up and others were running out of petrol. Deliveries had come to a standstill. Petrified by this, with more to come, the management now appealed to the courts to declare the strike illegal. Their fears were increased by the fact that the Mobil workers in Durban were threatening to join the strike and already were refusing to work overtime in protest.

To the protagonists of anti-sanctions this was seized on as a sign that the workers were against disinvestment and sanctions. The actual demands of the workers we deliberately ignored. The workers were demanding that Mobil must negotiate the terms of its disinvestment with their trade union — CWIU — and that Mobil should submit to the Union its disinvestment agreement with Gencor. It was also claimed by CWIU that Mobil had lied to the workers concerning disinvestment. It was agreed by COSATU that each and every company moving out of South Africa should submit its agreement to the union of that particular industry.

What is important to bear in mind is that when companies pull out the workers should not find themselves losing some of their hard-won benefits and rights. It is this vigilance that prompted CWIU to voice its demands and ultimately to decide to go on strike.

Shell And Buthelezi

It was not a sign of dissension to disinvestment as ludicrously claimed by Shell SA and by Gatsha Buthelezi. The Chamber of Mines came with a weird survey on sanctions, and were quick to use the results of this weird survey to claim that the COSATU position on sanctions did not have popular following. The survey claimed that 79% of COSATU members were opposed to sanctions and 81% were against disinvestment. Naturally these findings were rebutted by COSATU and NACTU. They asserted that the survey was rigged to ensure the results desired by the sponsors. The survey also was planned to coincide with the visit to the United States by Archbishop Tutu, Dr Boesak, Dr Naude and Rev Chikane.

John Kilroe, the executive chairman of Shell SA, claimed that disinvestment was not having an effect on South Africa and exhorted other multinationals to remain and work from within. He came out with the well-worn bluff that Shell SA is contributing to the social and recreational programmes of the black people. He went on in his 1988 report:

> "It has always been our belief and that of our shareholders that the withdrawal of Shell from South Africa could serve no meaningful purpose. We have never pretended that our stance was based on pure altruism and emotion. On the contrary, it is a business decision. We are here to do business in the long term . . .".

Such is the perverted thinking of this gentleman who has no other feeling save his bank account. He tries to pull the wool over our eyes with irrelevant TV programmes designed within the parameters of apartheid. In spite of his presence in South Africa unemployment is fast increasing among blacks and the housing shortage is getting worse. The large newspaper advertisements and the voices raised against the obliteration of justice and reason have not ended the repression and the brutality of apartheid. But the insatiable appetite for lucrative profits continues.

Our Position

The people of South Africa have long voiced their position on sanctions. That position still remains. They must not be told of suffering. Suffering is happening now.

The General Secretary of CWIU, Rod Crompton, said on the question of disinvestment:

> "We support effective pressure which will bring apartheid to an end but the things which have recently posed as disinvestment are not disinvestments. They have the effect of strengthening local capital rather than weakening apartheid. Our campaign seeks to expose the manouevrings of multinationals to maintain a foothold in South Africa."

It is also important that an agreement with a particular company should be agreed before disinvestment takes place i.e. a code for the right to strike, the recognition of the union etc. When disinvestment takes place this agreement must be respected. This can be guaranteed only when the terms of disinvestment and the handing over to the new company have been discussed with the union of the particular industry affected. Employment conditions and job security must not change for the worse. Disinvestment should benefit the workers and not the capitalists.

PERESTROIKA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

from Simon Stevens, Marylands, Western Australia

Dear Editor

The principle of *perestroika*, that all-human interests have priority over class interests, is seen by some as being at odds with the South African revolution.

A number of Soviet academics have expressed views to the effect that revolutions are outdated in the nuclear age and that "socialism will replace capitalism not as a result of some breakthrough, but as a result of the evolution of social conditions within the capitalist system and on the technological and economic basis created by capitalism." (Dr Yuri Krasin, *The Working Class Movement: Searching for the Democratic Alternative)*

I believe it would be wrong to assume that these views are in concert with the principles of *perestroika.*

According to Mikhail Gorbachev, "The problem of the correlation between class and all-human approaches is of signal importance. Sometimes we come across here with a certain misunderstanding of our position, with opposition of one thing to another. But it is a fact that interaction between the proletarian-class and all-human interests is inherent in Marxism." (*New Times* 47/88).

It is not enough to declare that class and all-human interests have a relationship. One must examine the place each occupies within the world. Examining the nature of this relationship Joe Slovo noted, "this is of course primarily dictated by the consequences of a nuclear holocaust. No one can dispute that such an event would respect neither class nor system." (*World Marxist Review* 5/89, No. 117 Fourth Quarter 1989.)

If all-human interests have priority over class interests then what is left of a class-based approach to struggle? Here I agree with Mikhail Gorbachev that "classes, antagonistic ones included, do exist — this is a reality. However, a crude division of the world community into classes which are poles apart, and the derivation of all other social and national differences from class antagonisms, no longer offer the key to understanding of what's going on in the world today." (*New Times* 47/89).

In this world of class divided societies where class struggle is a factor of everyday life in most countries, all-human interests are class-related. That is, the "proposition that there are human values which take priority over class values" is nothing other than the "assertion of certain values... in the mutual interests of otherwise contending classes." (Joe Slovo.)

I believe the statement by Joe Slovo that "it is theoretically doubtful to pose the problem of interdependence in a way which suggests a subordination of the class struggle to the struggle for peace, or vice versa," needs examination.

There is peace and peace. The struggle to prevent a nuclear holocaust is primary, all other struggles are subordinate, yet relative to it. The struggle for regional peace or national reconciliation is another matter. Regional conflicts need not necessarily lead to a nuclear holocaust. Here this depends "upon specific conditions at specific moments of time." (Slovo).

In *general*, global tensions have been lessened by the settlement of a number of regional conflicts. However, the main thing is not to apply ready-made formulas to all circumstances. Each and every struggle must be examined in its concrete situation, and in relation to all-human and class interests.

With regard to South Africa, is it not true that even the major imperialist powers are forced to keep their relationship with apartheid at a distance? They summarily condemn apartheid, while endeavouring to back it up materially. Here circumstances are externally favourable to change.

The Struggles Are One

The struggle for an environmentally safe and war-free world is *perestroika*'s aim. It is the aim of millions upon millions of people. However, it is not the aim of sick and dying apartheid. The question is not one of dampening down the struggle against apartheid, but rather how to achieve a democratic and non-racial South Africa, a South Africa that can properly fulfil its role in a world envisaged by revolutionary *perestroika* and millions of people in South Africa. People power is the guarantee of the success of *perestroika* and the South African revolution. The struggles are one. AMANDLA!

GLASNOST MUST BE THE ORDER OF THE DAY

from Masybuyeleni Magabane, Angola

Dear Editor
I was very much impressed by the letters in *The African Communist*.issue of the Second Quarter 1989. All are stressing the importance of democracy in the revolution.

One of them indicates that democracy is the only correct way to ensure that millions upon millions of people are involved in the making of history. This is true, but we must examine how to involve these millions in the making of history in a democratic atmosphere. Perhaps it is by electing structures that see to it that those who constitute these structures are wholeheartedly accepted by the majority. To achieve this properly, frankness and openness (*glasnost*) must be the order of the day at all levels.

This step will do away with rumour-mongering and mistrust and constructive criticism will be correctly applied. I feel there must be a close link between these structures that have the true interests of the people at heart with the people they lead so that the correct strategies and tactics can be arrived at. With millions of people involved in the democratic process, victory must be assured.

I have not read many books on communism to support what is in my mind and even at the end I won't write footnotes as others do. But I believe practical experience is the better school. "Action speaks louder than words", as the saying goes.

I believe that all patriots involved in our revolution must look seriously into the development of democracy and all its principles, without losing sight of our own conditions. I am of the opinion that for all of us to be stronger and more respected we must apply democracy correctly, for the sake of victory, if it is the key to victory.

ON TROTSKYISM

From Helena

Dear Editor,
The editorial note on Trotskyism (*AC* No. 118, 3rd Quarter 1989) raises some important issues and I must criticise the editor for restricting the expression of readers' opinions on the subject.

There is a history of damage done to the international working class struggle, to liberation stuggles and our own struggle by those we call Trotskyite activists. The examples are numerous, covering every major political development since 1917. We all, I am sure, have personal first-hand experience of the destructive force of Trotskyism.

It is clear that we need to educate the South African working class about the tactics of Trotskyism so as to limit its effectiveness in our sphere of work.

The article by Dialego (*AC* No. 115 Fourth Quarter 1988) was therefore especially timely and welcome, just as the decision not to publish contributions based on the interest aroused by Dialego is extremely regrettable.

The editor justifies his decision by quoting, somewhat tendentiously I feel, from Kotane's 1934 exhortation to Africanise the CPSA in order to "transform ourselves into an authentically *South African* Communist Party". Inexplicably this leads him to conclude that "general disquisitions on Stalin and Trotsky and the views of various communist parties would not serve our readers well".

In other words, we and *The African Communist* should confine our interests to purely national issues. But much of Dialego's article *is* a *general* disquisition on Trotsky. And on the contents page of Issue No. 115 there is a description of the article which is simply a *general* characterisation of Trotskyism. It is worth quoting:

> "While most communists today would no longer accept the view (current during the Stalin period) that Trotsky was 'an agent of fascism', few would deny that throughout his life Trotsky hindered rather than helped the struggle for socialism".

It is perhaps not surprising in the light of these general statements that readers responded in a general way! Moreover, in the same issue of *The African Communist* there is an article by the editor on the 19th conference of the CPSU which in all its 17 pages has just one reference to South Africa and includes, on the other hand, a lengthy disquisition on Stalin which, we have already been told, is unsuitable material for our readers!

If we are to continue to provide "a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our continent" we surely must respond more positively to our readers' comments on both specific and general matters which concern all communists as well as non-communists who read and are influenced by our journal.

§§§

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and for its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein lies the economic foundation of national movements.

V.I. Lenin: *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, 1914.*

§§§

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